

**A study of the collaborative process of volunteers in a literacy
intervention programme in support of vulnerable children in South
Africa**

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Abstract

The development of early literacy skills is critical for all children in South Africa. Children receive language and literacy development support in the home, school, and community environments. Vulnerable children, such as orphans, may receive this support from volunteers in their home environments. Additional language development support systems in the form of programmes run by volunteers are important. This study describes and analyses the process of collaboration between six volunteers who are involved in language-literacy programmes by examining how volunteers negotiate collaboration in promoting literacy development. This qualitative research study used a participatory action cycle design to investigate collaboration. A range of research methods such as focus groups, interviews, reflections and observations were used. Findings from this study provided insight into the identity of volunteers. They were people who had strong values in respect of literacy, a positive experience of volunteering, a sense of civic responsibility and an empathetic personality. The collaborative process was established through the presence of a strong common cause, vulnerability and trust among volunteers, a structured and well-led action cycle process, the development of self-reflection, and a passion to be change agents. Volunteers were able to problem solve and act to make changes to the intervention programme which included actions at a programme and volunteer level. The speech-language therapist (SLT's) role was critical in a literacy-related intervention as a support for volunteers. The expertise of SLTs, namely knowledge in language and literacy development, was valued in streamlining the process of taking appropriate actions to enrich the literacy programme.

Declaration

I, ...AMY ZOETMULDER....., hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree at this or any other university.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

DCYCC	Durban Child and Youth Care Centre
FHS HREC	Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee
NGO	Non- Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non- Profit Organisation
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
PAR	Participatory action research
SLT	Speech – language Therapist
UKZN	University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

List of Terms

Additional language	A language other than the mother tongue that a person or community uses for public communication (Cekiso, M. 2014).
Communication environment	“Refers to each environment (home, school, community) and the influence each element has on the exchange of ideas, news, views, messages, information or emotions” (Dockrell, Bakopoulou, Law, Spencer, & Lindsay, 2012).
DCYCC	Durban Child and Youth Care Centre (DCYCC), a non-governmental organisation located in Glenwood, Kwa Zulu-Natal, which provides substitute care to orphans, destitute children and children with parents who are unable to care for them.
Language-literacy support session	The intervention programme, typically a 45- minute session that supports language and literacy development.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Overview

This chapter provides an introduction to the study by outlining the research focus and the aims of the study. The rationale for the study is discussed, focusing specifically on the literacy challenges in South Africa as well as the need for SLTs to strengthen support for children. The study context also is explained in terms of literacy-related interventions in vulnerable contexts. An overview of the chapters is provided, and key terms and abbreviations are explained.

1.2. Orientation to the study

It is important to create a supportive communication environment for the development of early literacy skills in children (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006). Children receive support in home, school, and community environments. This study focuses on the volunteer process which supports vulnerable children. Vulnerable children who are orphans receive support in their home environments which is an institutional environment. In these environments, volunteers provide support. Vulnerable children, such as orphans in environments that are not always conducive to language learning, are in need of further language support (Bullard, 2010). Additional language development support systems in the form of programmes run by volunteers are important. Volunteers support children in learning English as an additional language. This study described and analysed the process of collaboration between volunteers who were involved in language-literacy programmes by examining how volunteers negotiate collaboration in promoting literacy development. This informed SLTs more about volunteers and their potential for collaboration with one another. A study of the collaborative process allows for knowledge that promotes educational change for volunteers to be better equipped with knowledge about collaboration. SLTs gained information necessary to inform and strengthen the quality of instruction and programme implementation which in turn will positively influence language-literacy outcomes in South Africa. There are inadequate numbers of SLTs to service the literacy needs of South Africa using current service delivery models. It is necessary for SLTs to understand collaboration between volunteers toward improved partnerships in future. This will mean that the scope

of knowledge that SLTs have can have a far-reaching impact and that ultimately literacy rates can be impacted on a large scale. The collaborative process will allow partnerships to form which will be effective in imparting social change in communities. It thus will be beneficial to describe and analyse how volunteers negotiate collaboration in supporting literacy development.

1.3. Research Aims and Objectives

1.3.1 Aim

To explore how volunteers negotiate collaboration in promoting literacy development.

1.3.2 Objectives

1. To describe the identity of volunteers.
2. To investigate the process of how volunteers engage in a collaborative process.
3. To describe and analyse actions of the collaborative literacy support process.

1.4 Rationale for the study

1.4.1 Socio-Political Context

South Africa is one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world (Erasmus, Schutte, Van der Merwe, & Geertsma, 2013). It has unique social, economic, and racial imbalances. These inequalities are largely related to disparities in access to education during the apartheid era. The apartheid system legally separated South Africa's population into four racial groups: black, white, coloured and Indian. Political power and privilege were invested in the white minority, while the black majority (Africans) were socio-politically disadvantaged. The system of education replicated this division and class inequality (Nkabinde, 1993). Unfortunately, even more than 20 years post democracy, these disparities are still evident. At the centre of political discussions in South Africa, there has been a consistent demand for educational transformation. Furthermore, a cycle of poverty has also continued for many who were disadvantaged during these years which has resulted in a high number of vulnerable children in our country. These social problems have resulted in

disparities in the schooling system and ultimately children's access to language-literacy learning. It is important to understand how children in this context can be better supported.

1.4.2 Multilingualism and Education

South Africa is also unique in that it has eleven official languages, with sign language recognised as home language/a subject at school. While approximately two-thirds of South African children are taught in their home language for their first three years of formal schooling, with English taught as an additional language from Grade 4, about 90 percent of children learn in English (Spaull, Pretorius, & Mohohlwane, 2018). There is evidence to suggest that it is important to have a strong home language foundation before learning a second language, for both socio-cultural as well as educational reasons. Some research suggests that first-language skills are often a good predictor of reading achievement in a second language. In South Africa, there is evidence that children taught in their home language in early grades achieve better success in English in later grades (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). The lens of English monolingualism is not always helpful in understanding the literacy learning challenges of South African children whose home language is an African language, or for planning and developing suitable teaching strategies.

1.4.3 Language-literacy in South Africa

South Africa's unique cultural diversity has resulted in South Africa's being one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world (Erasmus et al., 2013). As a result of the inequalities of apartheid, the home languages of learners and the language of learning in the classroom often differs (Erasmus et al., 2013). These inequalities are noticeable in the education system, characterised by low performance levels and a low quality of education (Spaull, 2012). Language barriers can affect the way in which teachers communicate with their learners. The majority of the population are expected to learn in English, a language that they have little exposure to; this in turn impacts the quality of instruction and language-learning opportunities which are critical for a supportive learning environment. The scale of this problem is large and is experienced by the majority of children in South Africa.

The large scale of this problem means that there are many challenges that face classrooms currently, particularly with regard to language of instruction and subsequently literacy

development and academic performance. Assessments conducted in the school environment in the last decade have shown that a large percentage of South African learners have not acquired foundational literacy skills in their early school years (O'Carroll & Hickman, 2012). This is concerning as children's early literacy skills serve as a foundation for literacy development at a later stage (Justice, Invernizzi, & Meier, 2002). Children who lack foundational literacy skills are at risk for difficulties with formal literacy. A study conducted in 2011 by Navsaria, Pascoe and Kathard found that more than half of the learners in the intermediate phase were not achieving adequately for their grade. Current classroom challenges will have a long-term impact on learners, as poor communication and early literacy skills affect academic performance in later school years, as well as access to work opportunities.

As a response to this literacy crisis evident amongst learners in SA, research has been done to serve as a vehicle for policymakers, planners of curriculums, and educators to improve literacy in South Africa. Research has been done on literacy development in a formal schooling context and there have been interventions developed to support language and literacy development at classroom level. One of the solutions to the literacy crisis is through the use of volunteers. According to Vareilles, Pommier, Marchal, & Kane (2017), the use of volunteers can often be a strategy to address the problem of a shortage of workers. Many strategies for language and literacy intervention exist; however there are not many studies that investigate how volunteer interventions run in the home environment.

1.4.4 Language and literacy and vulnerable children

According to Evans (2001), children in foster care or temporary homes are at a higher risk for low academic achievement, learning disabilities, language disorders and special education placement. It is therefore important that this population of children have access to literacy-inducing care environments to help ensure future success. If children who are in out-of-home care are provided with access to high-quality learning opportunities, they will have a greater chance of academic success (Moffat & Vincent, 2009); therefore this research is important to ensure that interventions are conducive to promoting language environments for vulnerable children.

Moffat and Vincent (2009) highlight the value and importance of different activities that are conducive to pre-literacy skill development such as adult–child activities which help children to acquire phonological awareness and print knowledge, develop vocabulary, share joint reading activities, and develop narrative skills through regular discussions about day-to-day activities in the children’s lives. Vulnerable children do not have as much one-on-one quality adult–child interaction as other children (Bennett, Weigel, & Martin, 2002) and therefore they could benefit from language-based interventions which offer this additional time as well as a focus on quality instruction to support their skills development. This study is relevant to the South African context as there are an estimated 3.7 million orphans in South Africa, many of whom are placed in in-care service facilities. Statistics show that 194 000 children in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) are orphaned and many of these are placed in care facilities (Hall & Sambu, 2014). It is important to understand how best language and literacy development can be facilitated in these contexts as we understand the importance of the development of pre-literacy skills in the early years and in the home environment.

1.4.5 Use of volunteers in literacy support

If volunteer groups are managed efficiently, they may provide an optimal service in their field of interest. If literacy-support groups are providing an effective service, then this will supplement the educational needs of the country. The greater the strength and number of literacy projects, the more children will benefit, and the greater literacy outcomes will be in South Africa. There are not enough professionals to be able to service the health and educational needs of this country. According to Campbell, Gibbs, Maimane and Nair (2008), volunteers are being prioritised for greater responsibility in healthcare owing to the scarcity of health professionals in Africa. Making use of volunteers to meet the needs and demands in South Africa will have to be considered seriously in the future.

1.4.6 Role of the SLT and collaboration

According to the SA Department of Health (2017), the scope of practice of an SLT includes “collaborating with other professionals” as well as “serving as case managers, service delivery coordinators, and members of collaborative teams” (p. 34). SLTs are engaging in collaborative services with teachers to support children in a school-based setting or classroom environment (Archibald, 2017). The model of service delivery that is most

commonly engaged in by SLTs largely occurs outside the classroom in individual or small-group sessions in what is referred to as a 'pull-out model' (Suleman et al., 2014). This model is working; however one must question its effectiveness when considering the extent of the population of children in South Africa who are at risk of not developing adequate language and literacy skills. The scale of the literacy needs in South Africa is far greater than the number of SLTs that can service the population. The role of SLTs in improving language and literacy in a classroom-based environment is still evolving and the impact of intervention has not yet been established (Kathard et al., 2011). It is necessary to continue to explore options whereby SLTs can fulfil their scope of practice but be effective in meeting the growing literacy needs of the country. SLTs will not be able to serve the population with its current service delivery model and therefore it is important that they begin to look at partnerships for intervention. This study will further examine if volunteers can be one of these groups of partners that SLTs can work with.

The body of SLTs are language and literacy development professionals as they have knowledge and expertise in language and literacy. This knowledge gained means that SLTs could be valuable contributors as volunteers with ideas on how to promote a language-rich environment which in turn will increase literacy outcomes. Individual volunteers have their own identity, interests and ideas that when brought together to work together in a meaningful way with a shared goal can serve to promote language and literacy development.

1.5 Study context

The study will take place at the Durban Child and Youth Care Centre (DCYCC) a non-governmental organisation located in Glenwood, KwaZulu-Natal, which provided substitute care to orphans, destitute children and children with parents who are unable to care for them. The majority of the children are black children, with Zulu as a first language who have been removed from home environments that are not suitable and or orphaned. A language – literacy support intervention focusing on developing literacy in learners from Grade 1–3 is being used at the DCYCC currently. This programme teaches foundational reading, and develops basic skills in word recognition and deciphering. The syllabus is available in a

manual which contains all instructions, assessments, lesson plans, worksheets and apparatus required by the volunteer. The programme is currently being run at the DCYCC by a team of volunteers. The volunteers are a diverse group of women which includes students, young parents and full-time workers of varying age and occupations. Volunteers are not required to be qualified teachers or SLTs; a love of children and a willingness to love and care for people and do some very basic training are adequate. The training involves a two-hour course on the basics of phonics and a half-day course outlining the programme. There are currently nine volunteers involved in the programme.

1.5.1 Positioning the researcher

The researcher in this study is both an SLT and a volunteer in the literacy intervention run at the DYCC. The researcher has a shared background with specific skills in the development of language and literacy. This scope of knowledge is what inspired a greater understanding of how skills can be used and spread further so that there is a great and positive influence on literacy development in South Africa. The relationship between volunteers and researcher will not be affected by the researcher's position as a volunteer, while the volunteer's decision to enrol will not be influenced by the relationship as outlined in the recruitment document (See Appendix G). For the purpose of the study, the researcher will be positioned as a volunteer in the study using the specific skills, knowledge and background that she has to negotiate the collaborative process.

1.5.2 Background to study context

It is important to describe the nature of the relationship between volunteers who are involved in the intervention before the process of the action cycle began. Volunteers in this group are known to one another very casually; some are friends in contexts outside of the volunteer space; however most of the volunteers are only familiar with one another because of the weekly intervention session. Conversation is polite and friendly, there is not much sharing of information but rather each volunteer comes in and works independently with her own child. Information sharing is done via a WhatsApp communication group and is mostly restricted to location, time and other such reminders. Messages of gratitude towards the volunteers are shared bimonthly as an encouragement to each volunteer. There are

neither set meeting times nor opportunities for all the volunteers to get to know one another.

This research will inform knowledge surrounding collaboration; the programme currently offered at the DCYCC will be strengthened and those who have greatest need of language and literacy support, vulnerable children, will have the most benefit from this specific research. The hope is that vulnerable children who are in similar environments and who are likely to need or receive language and literacy-based support will receive more effective programmes based on greater knowledge about the process of collaboration as gleaned from this research.

1.6 Overview of chapters

Chapter 1 provides the orientation and background to the study. It outlines the aims and objectives of the study as well as the rationale and study context.

Chapter 2 explores the literature on factors that support communication and early literacy development and provides a conceptual framework for collaboration.

Chapter 3 details the research methodology. The methodology discussed includes research design, participants, sampling (method and size), recruitment and procedure. Data-collection procedures as well as data-analysis methods are included in this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The data was analysed qualitatively.

Chapter 5 notes conclusions drawn from the study. Comparisons with the literature are made in relation to the aims of the study. This chapter also documents the clinical implications of the study and outlines any limitations of the research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Development of language and literacy

The development of literacy skills follows a natural progression through particular stages. The stages of development are not exclusive, nor are they isolated from one another. It is common for children to develop these skills at different paces and move backwards and forwards between the stages at certain times. According to Browder, Courtade-Little, Wakeman, and Rickleman (2006), the continuum of literacy development includes but is not limited to foundational skills in infants and toddlers: emergent language literacy skills include skills such as decoding words, forming simple sentences, developing ideas in a logical progression, reading independently, writing ideas, and still further developing into the ability to read for the acquisition of knowledge and think critically about ideas presented in a text. There is a relationship between oral language and literacy skills. Children with a history of oral language difficulties are more likely to present with reading difficulties than their peers (Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 2001). Research has shown that general oral-language abilities, especially vocabulary, provide the critical basis for the emergence of phonological sensitivity or an awareness of the sound structure of words which plays a vital role in subsequent reading achievement (Cain & Oakhill, 2007). Building vocabulary and background knowledge is important throughout early childhood so that children will understand the information they have decoded (Raynolds, Gillis, Matos, & Carpini, 2019). If we consider that language literacy learning occurs in a social context with a rich language environment (Cunningham, 2009), then children should be engaged in a literacy-supportive environment that allows them to make choices, explore conceptual ideas and experiment with social language by exchanging ideas with peers and adults.

2.2 The communication environment

Children learn and experience language through social interaction with participants in their environments (Neuman, Koh, & Dwyer, 2008). This environment includes but is not limited to the classroom environment and can also include the home environment. Research highlights the importance of children being afforded opportunities to make use of their language skills (Dockrell et al., 2012). These could include being able to work in small

groups, such as would occur when volunteers implement language literacy-based interventions and volunteers provide quality oral language experiences through more personal interactions with children.

It is not only the classroom that serves as an environment for communication. The home environment has an impact on literacy interactions, explorations, expressions and behaviours (Saracho, 1997). According to Moffat and Vincent (2009), the home setting is effective in promoting emergent literacy as it provides the child with a comfortable background for learning. Children who live in children's homes have a different home learning environment as a result of the nature of children's homes (Moffat & Vincent, 2009). These vulnerable children are therefore likely to be at a disadvantage for emergent literacy and language acquisition. Factors that could place them at a disadvantage include various pre-care barriers such as a lack of access to literacy-inducing materials, less modelling of literacy activities by adults, and fewer interpersonal interactions with family members (Moffat & Vincent, 2009). These types of environments will greatly benefit from language- and literacy-related interventions to improve literacy outcomes of vulnerable children. Volunteering in a literacy-related intervention taking place in a home for vulnerable children will provide great insight into how volunteers negotiate collaboration in promoting literacy development.

2.3 Volunteer groups

A volunteer can be defined as a person who does something, particularly helping other people, without being forced or paid to do it. Globally, there is a growing interest in volunteering as it is valued by the United Nations General Assembly (2001) as an "important and under-recognised asset" (p. 2). Volunteers can be used in a variety of settings, and hold benefits for society, government, organisations and the individual. In many developing countries, a shortage of healthcare workers is resulting in shifting of tasks to trained volunteers (Vareilles et al., 2017). In a South African context, the Government recognises the potential of volunteering as a social development strategy (Department of Arts and Culture, 2013). A survey done by Statistics South Africa (2011) calculated that of the 48% of

2 499 participants reported to have volunteered, 37% of those volunteered in formal organisations, 54% informally, and 9% participated in both forms.

A culture of volunteering is prevalent in South Africa, servicing many sectors. It is important to gain further insight into volunteer group tendencies and the group dynamics that are at play. It is also important to understand more about the type of person that is likely to volunteer.

Wilson and Musick (1997) proposed an integrated theory of volunteering. They suggest that volunteering is based on three foundations. First, that volunteering is a productive activity and human capital-related aspects such as educational attainment, skill sets, experience income and health determine an individual's probability of volunteering. Second, volunteering involves collective action, and therefore the decision to volunteer can be directed by the actions and behaviours of others. Social networks and ties encourage trust, and this further normalises and encourages volunteering. Third, volunteering is an activity guided by ethics and values, acquired from environments such as the church, community, family or school.

Research suggests that values and understanding are the strongest motives for volunteering (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2007). A person's commitment to volunteering can be attributed to a range of factors, some of which include their emotional attachment to the organisation, their personal responsibility, the respect they receive from the volunteer organisation and attendance and performance on the job (Okun & Schultz, 2003). Wilson (2000) notes that individuals who are more likely to volunteer live by the values and beliefs of community solidarity, altruism, compassion, caring about others, and social responsibility.

Vareilles et al. (2017) state that a volunteer's performance can be influenced by two main attributes. Their cognitive attributes such as individual knowledge and skill acquisition, and their affective attributes such as self-esteem, emotional attachment to the organisation, self-efficacy and satisfaction with work. Vareilles et al. (2017) note the mechanisms of "self-esteem, sense of pride, sense of duty, sense of community, and recognition" (p.9) are all drivers of volunteers. Research also noted that volunteering success is facilitated if there is a supportive social, material and political context as well as a strong history of social

organisation. Often interventions that rely on volunteers operate in a dynamic social system, and therefore early visible positive results among community members facilitate more positive outcomes among volunteers (Vareilles et al., 2017).

Research also shows that specific group dynamics can act as a catalyst for volunteer activities and produce more volunteers through a strong group identity and clear group norms. It is important to gain further insight into the specifics of group dynamics in volunteerism as this will play a role in establishing collaboration (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009).

Volunteers also value opportunities for education and skills development: an emphasis on skill-based and ongoing training, supervision and follow-up as well as contextually relevant resources were all factors that triggered feelings of self-confidence and motivation among volunteers (Vareilles et al., 2017). This type of knowledge and skill upliftment could be provided by SLTs to strengthen volunteer motivation and longevity and benefit literacy support in South Africa.

2.4 Collaboration and SLTs

SLTs engage in collaboration in a variety of settings and partners. The World Health Organization (2010) notes that interprofessional collaborative practice occurs “when multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds work together with patient, families, carers and communities to deliver the highest quality care” (p. 7). SLTs may collaborate with other health professionals in clinics, hospitals and communities (Pickering & Embry, 2013). SLTs also engage in collaborative efforts in the classroom setting, partnering with educators to support children in the school environment (Archibald, 2017).

Volunteers are used by school programmes to assist children in need of literacy support, and many of these programmes are related to reading (Tracey, Hornery, Seaton, Craven, & Yeung, 2014). Schools may make use of volunteers to provide literacy support due to a lack of resources to hire experts (Al Otaiba & Foorman, 2008). In these settings they work alongside educators and partner with them to facilitate literacy support.

Studies suggest that with appropriate training, a range of adults can support children to learn to read (Slavin, Lake, Davis, & Madden, 2011). In Africa, an evaluation of an intervention in Ghana which recruited teacher community assistants from high schools to deliver literacy support for children in Grades 1 to 3, found that the positive impacts were still evident one year later (Innovations for Poverty Action, 2014). These findings that effective literacy support does not have to be delivered by qualified teachers is of relevance to the South African context where resources are scarce in the education system. They support the case for programmes that maximise the capacity and skills of volunteers. According to Slavin et al. (2011),

“the effects seen for paraprofessional tutors and for volunteer tutors using structured and intensive programs pose a real challenge to the idea that only certified teachers can be effective tutors” (p. 56).

Volunteers are successfully being used to implement language and literacy support interventions and programmes in South Africa (Krugell, 2010). They are collaborating with necessary stakeholders to ensure efficiency of their service. It is important to extend the research in the field regarding collaboration between these volunteers and SLTs.

2.5 Framework for volunteering

Understanding factors that influence people to volunteer and identifying a profile of volunteers is important. Haski-Leventhal (2009) claims that the opportunity and ability of people to volunteer is associated with socio-demographic factors such as socio-economic status, cultural norms, religious adherence, and personal values. Volunteering can often be an activity that is performed by people with greater human and social resources (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). People with an education, good health and wealth are more likely to volunteer. Paternalism and gendered social roles have also led to a higher prevalence of female volunteers in activities associated with caring and male volunteers in activities associated with leadership (Caprara, Mati, Obadare, & Perold, 2011). Personal circumstances can also be a reason for individuals' choosing to volunteer their time. This may be an expression of their altruism or community identity, and those who are integrated

into their society through social networks are more likely to volunteer. People who are unemployed or retired may be more likely to volunteer as a strategy for coping or as a means to gain experience in a field (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). The identity of the volunteers in this study is also viewed through the disciplines of economics (human and social resources), psychology (personality) and sociology (social contexts).

2.6 Conceptual framework for collaboration

Once the identity of volunteers is established, it is important to ascertain how volunteers begin to work together in a collaborative way to understand the process of how volunteers engage. Collaboration allows existing programmes and services to be better linked as the skills and resources of many people are joined (Green & Johnson, 2015).

Collaboration implies mutual interdependence as well as mutual respect, with each member bringing something valuable (Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, & Lewis, 2005). Research suggests that there is considerable diversity in the way that collaboration is defined and in the factors that influence collaboration. Some of these influences are explored below to create a conceptual framework for understanding and describing collaboration.

2.7 Context of collaboration

Collaboration can occur in a variety of contexts, across systems, departments, programmes and services. Collaboration is effective when it can be guided by the needs of the organisation, the community setting and the style of the collaborative partners (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). An initial step in establishing a context for community is by gaining entry into the community organisation; this involves spending time in the community of interest and learning about the organisation's culture, history in the community, and understanding the vision for the future (Harper et al., 2004). This creates a sense of mutual understanding and background which is a foundational framework for collaboration. Collaboration is effective when it can occur within a programme that has structure.

2.8 Motivation to collaborate

Successful collaboration is based on a shared vision, common goals, and a climate of trust and mutual respect. Small (2001) states, “To be motivated to collaborate, all participants must first see some personal value in collaboration and believe that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful collaborative partners” (p. 1). These are prerequisites to establishing a collaborative culture. According to Vareilles et al. (2017), volunteers are more motivated to collaborate when there is an emotional attachment to the organisation, background and past experiences of the volunteer and community setting, as well as to the context of the intervention. Given the unique vulnerability of the population receiving the intervention in this study, volunteers may be more motivated to collaborate.

2.9 Models of collaboration

A model conceptualised by Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005) suggests an interactive and contextual model for developing collaboration and ensuring sustainable partnerships. There are three phases in this model, and these include: 1) gaining entry into the community phase, 2) developing and sustaining the collaboration phase, and 3) recognising the outputs and benefits phase. As this study is examining the process of collaboration, it will be beneficial to elaborate on Phase 2, developing and sustaining the collaboration further. Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005) highlight some key factors that enable a collaboration to develop and be sustained: these include developing trust and mutual respect, establishing good communication, creating a positive culture of learning, respecting the culture of the community, and developing an action agenda. The process of collaboration that occurs will be commented on using these key factors. According to Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005), these key factors are interactive and influence all other factors.

Gitlin, Lyons, and Kolodner (1994) conceptualised the five-stage model of collaboration according to the social exchange theory. The predominant idea of the social exchange theory is that understanding interactions is key to understanding complex social behaviours between groups (D’Amour, Ferrada-Videla, San Martin Rodriguez, & Beaulieu, 2005). This model of collaboration includes five overlapping stages: 1) assessment and goal setting, 2)

determination of a collaborative fit, 3) identification of resources and reflection, 4) refinement and implementation, and 5) evaluation and feedback.

The model of collaboration of D'Amour et al. (2005) suggests that collaboration is a complex and dynamic evolving process which is not easily defined or conceptualised and therefore the process of collaboration is subject to constant change. Analysis of the models of collaboration indicated some elements of commonality and some elements of difference. Some shared points include the presence of environmental factors that influence the collaborative process; all the models considered the issue of interactions and proposed an approach to conceptualising the process. In most of the frameworks, building trust is a key process. According to D'Amour et al. (2005), all the selected models of collaboration that were investigated refer to the same key concepts of collaboration but choose to express them in different ways, including sharing, partnership, interdependency, and power. The current study aims to use the various models of collaboration as a way to define the process of collaboration negotiated by volunteers in promoting literacy development.

Another key conceptual framework for collaboration is shared creation as defined by Schrage (1995). According to Schrage (1995), this notion of shared creation means that true collaborators co-construct a solution to a problem that none would have formulated on their own. The processes of shared creation include: 1) having a shared goal, 2) making use of shared spaces, and 3) the use of shared resources. In this process, collaborative partners desire to solve problems, create, and discover through mutual respect, tolerance, and trust (Mitchell, 2017). Some of the important aspects of this model include clear lines of responsibility between collaborative partners, communication in both formal and informal environments, and support from outsiders for further insight (Mitchell, 2017). This model supports the idea that all members are equal contributors (Schrage, 1995).

2.10 Participatory action research and collaboration

Developing a plan for a collaborative action agenda is consistent with a participatory action research (PAR) approach (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). In PAR, the research agenda is guided by the needs of the community, not the needs of the researcher, as the needs of the

community are practical nature and focused on action. In PAR, partners become an important part of the team and are able to influence the research agenda from the beginning of the collaborative process (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). In this process, all partners are given equal power to identify goals and objectives, to establish the research methodology, to collect and analyse knowledge, and to use findings (Park & Williams, 1999). When the development of a research agenda is initiated by members of the community and designed to assist them with overcoming a specific need, this facilitates shared accountability of the project results, ownership from members, and ultimately sustainability of the project over time (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). This framework of the action cycle will be used to describe and analyse the actions of a collaborative literacy support process.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Aim

To explore how volunteers negotiate collaboration in promoting literacy development.

3.2 Objectives

1. To describe the identity of volunteers.
2. To investigate the process of how volunteers engage in a collaborative process.
3. To describe and analyse actions of the collaborative literacy support process.

3.3 Research Design

The research approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. Qualitative research design allows for more open-ended questions and discussions to occur which gives the participants the ability to give answers that are meaningful and culturally relevant, unanticipated by the researcher and rich and explanatory in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The research design for this study follows a Participatory Action Research (PAR) process. The goal of PAR is to impart social change (MacDonald, 2012) and involves participants as active members of the research and change process. PAR is considered a subgroup of action research, which can be defined as a methodical collection and analysis of data for the purpose of taking action and making change (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). PAR involves a cyclic process of research, reflection, and action (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). This research design is well suited to the study as the aim is to investigate and study not only collaboration, but also to impart changes simultaneously. It allows the participants to attempt to solve particular social problems, and is suited to the research as it involves the full and active participation of the community at all levels of the research process and encompasses a range of powerless individuals (e.g. orphans). It also allows the researcher to be a committed participant, facilitator and learner in the research and change process.

The research design for this study involved a combination of complementary qualitative techniques as this allowed for an effective way to evaluate complex sociocultural processes including attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and skills of professionals (Mallinson, Hudley, Strickling, & Figa, 2011). This design made use of content analysis of reflective journal entries and transcripts from group and individual interviews. Naturalistic observations during sessions were used to observe the behaviours of the volunteers during their lesson. This research design is useful for an exploratory or preliminary study as it is inexpensive and time efficient (Cozby, 2009).

Collaborative goal setting refers to deciding on goals together through a process that will include identifying needs, prioritising ideas, listening and observing one another, and assessing and evaluating data. It is important that clear and functional goals are set as these enhance motivation and lead to improved outcomes. Volunteers were members of the goal-setting process as different needs emerged from the focus-group sessions. These interviews, weekly reflections and focus groups allowed a time for the needs to be identified, for group members to listen to one another for different goals to be prioritised and then assessed and evaluated collaboratively. Goals that are set collaboratively include identifying a focus for growth and filling the knowledge gap, developing steps towards implementing an action, and collecting and assessing data (Øien, Fallang, & Østensjø, 2010).

Volunteers were engaged in the collaborative process by attempting to ensure that the following prerequisites were maintained. Clear communication among all members was prioritised. Regular sessions of brainstorming were held and problem solving with participation from all members was encouraged. Engagement in the process also was achieved because of commitment to the project and to the children receiving the intervention. Positive supportive working relationships among all team members was also prioritised.

According to Zuber-Skerritt (2015), it is important that goals and key results are converted into a detailed plan of action. These actions need to be appropriately evaluated and placed on a timeline. A cyclic process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting was used to convert goals and expected results into actions.

3.4. Critique of PAR

PAR is increasingly used in community-based programs and projects (Marincowitz, 2003). Given the complex nature of programs that are based in the community and PAR and evaluation processes, this form of methodology can produce unintended effects. (Gregory, 2000) Factors such as differences in knowledge and power relations among participants may produce both empowerment and disempowerment in participants. Some may critique the scientific rigour of the methodologies as they take into account the perspectives, values and interpretations of people from a range of background and contexts. Some are also of the opinion that Participatory action research processes are dominated by Western epistemologies and methods. (Le Grange, 2001). This study has endeavoured to increase the rigour and trustworthiness of participatory evaluations and PAR increases the likelihood that results are seen as credible and are used to continually improve programs. These forms of rigour include communication methods that develop mutual trust and open communication, using multiple sources of data and methods of data collection, prioritising critical reflection, and allowing member checking.

3. 5 Method of recruitment

The proposal was submitted to the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee (FHS HREC) for ethics approval. Ethics approval to commence the research was granted on 13 August 2018, HREC REF 317/2018. Permission was obtained from the institution where research was to be conducted. A document outlining the expectations of the researcher for the participants and summarising the research aims was given to potential participants by the researcher to allow them to decide if they were willing to participate in the study. This document (see Appendix G) was emailed to all volunteers in the programme three weeks before the start of an 11-week cycle of the language-literacy programme. They had one week to decide if they would like to be involved in the study and had time to contact the researcher if they should need to. This document also outlined that there was no expectation from the researcher that they participate in the study. Of the nine volunteers in the intervention programme, six chose to be participants in the research study.

The nature of the language-literacy intervention at the children's home is an individual or small-group intervention session. Therefore volunteers who chose not to engage in the research could continue their sessions as normal, while the children would not be impacted by the research process as they would continue to receive language and literacy support. Those volunteers participating in the research also could continue with their normal weekly sessions.

Informed consent was then obtained from the volunteers involved in the language- and literacy-based intervention. See Appendix G.

3.5.1 Obtaining informed consent

Volunteers were given information letters outlining the purpose of the study and why they were invited to participate. These letters were emailed to all volunteers currently involved in the language literacy support, allowing for any influence from the researcher to be mitigated as well as ensuring privacy of the volunteers to decide independently if they would like to be included in the research. The details of the study were included, as well as all confidentiality arrangements. Volunteers were given a week to ask the researcher questions and respond.

3.6 Sampling Methods

Purposive sampling was used in this study. Ritchie and Elam, (2003) defines this sampling approach as a strategy where "Members of a sample are chosen with a purpose to represent a location or type in relation to the criterion" (p. 77) This type of sampling is beneficial as it is interested in groups of people and the role they play in dynamic processes within an organisation or group (Palys, 2008). Specifically for this study, it is important to understand volunteers and it is important that participants are volunteers in the intervention. Participants were selected according to the relevant criteria as per below.

3.7 Participants and Setting

People who volunteer to be involved in a literacy-related intervention programme at a children's home were invited to be participants in the study. The study took place at the DCYCC a non-governmental organisation located in Glenwood, KwaZulu-Natal, which provides substitute care to orphans, destitute children and children with parents who are unable to care for them. Participants have varying levels of exposure to working with children and varying professional backgrounds. Interactions between the volunteers takes place during weekly intervention sessions which occur at a children's home during a typical language-literacy support session. The participants in this study are referred to as volunteers. Only observation took place at the children's home; all other research methodology activities did not happen on site but rather in a neutral setting. Staff members at the children's home did not form part of the participants of the research.

3.8 Selection Criteria

Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Current involvement as a volunteer in the literacy-related intervention programme implemented at a local children's home (DCYCC).
- Voluntary participation in the study.

Exclusion Criteria

- Volunteers not committed to the literacy-related intervention programme for more than one school term.

3.9 Method

3.9.1 Overview

The research procedure took 11 weeks in total and consisted of two cycles of six weeks and 5 weeks each. The cyclic process allowed time for planning, acting, observing and reflecting

to convert goals and expected results into actions. In week one, individual biographical interviews were done to establish the identities of the volunteers. Thereafter the first six-week cycle began, starting with a focus group to define the issue, two weeks of reflection, one week of observation, another week of reflection and a second focus group in the last week of the cycle to analyse and reflect on the intervention. Thereafter the second cycle began following the same format as above and ending with an individual interview with each volunteer. The specifics of each methodology are outlined below (see also Appendix B for a research method outline detailing the 11-week cycle).

All research methods are well established in qualitative research and were selected to ensure credibility of the findings. The following methods were used:

Bionarrative Interview

Before the 11-week cycle began, an in-depth individual biographical interview was completed with each volunteer, to establish the identity of each volunteer. This bionarrative interview approach was used as this helps people to tell stories about their personal experiences, in their natural way, from their own perspectives (Wengraf, 2011). Open-ended questions were used to gain an understanding of the volunteers: what they do, what resources they have and the knowledge they bring to the negotiation of the collaborative process. All volunteers had been involved in the programme for at least two months; therefore there is an understanding of the organisation and a level of trust among the volunteers, allowing for an ease of sharing information as well as ensuring credibility. The researcher generated the interview and produced the results into a bionarrative summary, which was member checked by each volunteer. See Appendix C for a brief overview of some of the key areas investigated through the interview.

Participant observation

Participant observation is an innovative qualitative research method of enquiry and a rich source of data collection that is commonly employed in PAR (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Naturalistic observations were conducted within the natural setting of the intervention to record events as they occurred – this allowed for a more accurate depiction of the

intervention (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). The observations were non-disguised as volunteers will know that they are being observed. Participant observation involves the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and objects in the social setting using detailed field notes (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). Owing to the collaborative nature of the process, it was beneficial to include all the volunteers in the study to be a part of the observation process to be able to take note of insights that they observed throughout the process. See Appendix D for a guideline of the observation schedule.

Reflective journals

Volunteers were asked to keep journals and to write short weekly reflections on language variation and discuss any challenges or insights that arose in their own facilitation of literacy development. The researcher collected these journals and reflections bi-monthly electronically, and systematically coded the text to identify themes and patterns. Using their experiential knowledge, volunteers were able to communicate their concerns to represent their culture, and expose social problems with a view to igniting social change (Sutton-Brown, 2015).

Focus Groups

Focus groups constitute a socially oriented process that allows communication to occur between the research contributors in order to generate data (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, Mukherjee, 2018). The small-group nature of a focus group ensures a conducive environment for optimal communication among all volunteers. The researcher facilitated a supportive environment to allow for discussion around differing viewpoints. The group met once every four weeks in the cycle to be able to engage in the action-learning process, facilitate dialogue, and allow for opinions and ideas to be voiced and actions taken. The aim of these focus groups was for the researchers to meet to discuss their insights, noting challenges that had been faced and proposing ideas collectively to eliminate these challenges and think of solutions. The emphasis of these meetings was on sharing ideas and professional dialogue (Bos, Mather, Narr, & Babur (1999). Focus groups did not occur at the DCYCC, but rather at a private meeting point that was a neutral setting. Refer to Appendix E for an overview of the focus-group session.

Interviews

A semi-structured 15-minute interview was conducted with each volunteer after 11 weeks of the intervention to gain further insight into each volunteer's experiences. Interviewing allows for collection of data regarding human experiences and enables volunteers to describe their situation (Stringer, 1999). The interviews were then transcribed and content analysed following a similar coding system as mentioned above. According to Mallinson et al. (2011), interviews are well suited to capture critical reflection and changes in beliefs, attitudes, and practices. Through these reflections and interviews further insight was gleaned as to how volunteers negotiate collaboration. Interviews took place at a neutral meeting point.

See Appendix B for a table presenting the preliminary research method outline with timeframe.

3.10 Data Analysis

The goal of qualitative data analysis is to study the meaningful and symbolic content of data. Both a content and a thematic analysis will be used to ensure rigour of the results. Content analysis is the procedure for the categorisation of verbal or behavioural data for the purpose of classification, summarisation and tabulation (Bengtsson, 2016).

Data collected from the reflective journals, observations, focus groups and semi-structured interviews was organised. First, the data was transcribed and translated. According to Nikander (2008), the ability to transcribe talk that originates from various contexts into a written format is an essential element of qualitative research. Data cleaning also occurred, as this is an important part of the process of preparing data for analysis (Davies, 2010). This process involves matching data and tasks that prepare the data for analysis. This included corroborating the data, checking transcriptions, and receiving feedback. All the interviews were checked by the participants to ensure they identified with their bionarrative summaries. The final process in the organisation of the data was to label the data. This included structuring and familiarising by immersion into the data and reading through the responses multiple times.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. It minimally organises and describes the data set in detail. It also interprets various aspects of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is considered the most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover using interpretations (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2008). Qualitative research requires understanding and collecting diverse data. Thematic analysis allows an opportunity to understand the potential of an issue more widely (Joffe & Yardley, 2004).

A thematic content analysis involves a few different processes. This included making lists of various types of information that were identified, line by line coding which involves identifying important features of the data relevant to answering the research question, and coding the entire dataset into major and minor descriptive themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The data was placed into an excel spreadsheet according to the relevant codes. The next phase involved searching for themes, and examining the codes and collected data to identify significant broader patterns of meaning and potential themes. This was done three times by the researcher for each data set to ensure validity. The researcher then made connections in the data and looked for relationships to establish how ideas have been influenced. Debriefing with a supervisor was important to ensure good management of the data by the researcher and for ongoing oversight and impartial analysis of unanticipated events.

A systematic process analysis was achieved by reviewing the cycles of action that took place, assessing their performance, and identifying areas for improvement.

3.10.1 Data Analysis for Objective 1

The identity of volunteers was determined by establishing some of the key factors that volunteers identify themselves by. Volunteers' bionarrative summaries were viewed through establishing human resources, personalities and social contexts of each volunteer.

3.10.2 Data Analysis for Objective 2

The process of collaboration was investigated by first determining the motivation for collaboration, and then analysing the process of collaboration by using an action cycle and

an interactive, evolving framework to analyse processes evolving at each point of the action cycle to determine what gets volunteers connected and to form relationships. It was important to analyse the data for subtle communication patterns and relational interactions that give further insight into the 'how' of the development of the process of collaboration. Data that points to the process will be coded during the data analysis process.

3.10.3 Data Analysis for Objective 3

The specific actions and outcomes of the collaborative literacy support process was described using the action cycle as a point of reference. Through the development of an action agenda and the necessity of the stages of refinement and implementation of the solutions, the emerging actions in the collaborative process became evident. These are highlighted as key themes during the data-analysis process. It was important to reflect on the programme as a whole to establish the 'what' of this research

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical principles were adhered to according to the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki of Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (World Medical Association, 2008).

3.11.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

Methods to maintain confidentiality were implemented to respect participants' rights to anonymity (Wassenaar, 2006). This includes participants' rights to control their information and protect their privacy. This study achieved confidentiality by making use of a coding system during data collection to protect the identity of the research participants. In the focus group, participant details were known to other focus-group volunteers and the researcher could not guarantee that others in the group would respect the confidentiality of the group. Part of the informed consent form included a section on maintaining confidentiality in the focus-group session and the researcher also reiterated the importance of this at the beginning of the focus group. To ensure that confidentiality and anonymity were upheld, no identifying information was collected about the volunteer in the reflective journals and interviews. Paper-based records were kept in a secure location only accessible

to the researcher. Data was coded to remove any personal details. Computer-based records were available only to personnel involved in the study, using access privileges and passwords. Audio and/or video recordings were transcribed and then destroyed to eliminate identification of participants. As the researcher was also a participant in the research, she was expected to conduct herself professionally. Debriefing with a supervisor was ongoing to ensure good management of the role of the researcher and to allow for oversight and perspective.

3.11.2 Autonomy

Autonomy is an ethical principle which refers to respect for an individual (South African Medical Research Council, 2000). Participants were asked to participate in the research voluntarily. Informed consent was provided by the volunteers and they were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.11.3 Beneficence

The ethical principle of beneficence refers to the researcher's obligation to maximise benefits and minimise harm experienced by the participants in the study (Cash, Wikler, Saxena & Capron, 2009). This study presented benefits to the participants, with minimal risks. The benefits of this study included a better understanding of the collaboration between volunteers and SLTs, and should inform intervention programme implementation, and ultimately language learning outcomes in South Africa. Participants were encouraged to contact the researcher for any additional feedback. Participants should feel more confident in their abilities to implement language and literacy interventions in the future.

3.11.4 Non-maleficence

As this was an observational study, it was not expected that any participants would be at risk of harm. The focus-group method cannot ensure confidentiality, so there could be a potential loss of confidentiality; however adequate procedures were put in place to ensure that members of the focus groups kept any information confidential. See Appendix E outlining Focus Group procedures. Children at the home were only part of the observations but not the focus of the study.

3.11.5 Justice

This study was conducted fairly and equally. All participants who met the inclusion criteria were included in the study and findings from the research will be shared electronically with each participant.

3.11.6 Criteria for Evaluating Qualitative Studies

The researcher wrote the research to allow the world of the subjects to be real to the reader to improve the authenticity of the results. The observations were conducted repeatedly at different times, the emergence of similar results confirmed reliability of the results. Prolonged engagement with volunteers for 11 weeks, peer debriefing, member checking as well as use of purposive sampling were all techniques used to ensure the quality of the study.

Chapter 4 – Findings

In order to be able to analyse how volunteers engage in a collaborative process, it was first essential to understand the backgrounds of people who volunteer in programmes. The following bionarratives help to establish the identity of each volunteer. It was important to establish the identities of the volunteers to situate their motivation for volunteering.

4.1 Bionarrative Summaries

Volunteer 1, S

M is a 30-year-old white ¹ woman, living in Durban, South Africa, with her husband. Together they lead a local Christian church in Glenwood. She loves trying new restaurants, exploring beautiful places, appreciating interesting design as well as spending time with her friends and family. She grew up in a Christian missionary home in England, a middle child between two sisters. The context of her parents' work meant that she moved around during her childhood. When she was six, her family moved to America for one year, then moved back to England until she was 14, when they moved to Zimbabwe for a few years and thereafter returned to South Africa. She completed her high school studies in Durban, and obtained a degree in development studies and politics at UKZN. M grew up very aware of the contrast between First World and Third-World development. Her mum was involved in teaching ceramics to those with special needs as well as adult English classes in the evenings and at weekends, while her dad did a lot of mission work in Eastern Europe and Africa. As a family they returned to Zimbabwe when M was 14 during a very unstable economic time in the country. She recalls some of the harsh reality of the food shortages and inflation rates while they were there and as a teenager found this cultural shift difficult to become accustomed to. Her exposure to the education systems in different countries as well as the disparity in economic development between countries, together with her love for people and a desire to see people grow their skills in different areas, led to her belief that she would like to work in the non-profit sector. M has been working in this sector for three years and currently heads up the small business development of a non-profit organisation. She loves to see other people's dreams come alive and sees her work as an opportunity for reconciliation within the mentorship programme. Before she began her work in the non-profit sector, she did some tutoring in the afternoons. While she was tutoring English to two high school boys, she mentioned to her mum how much these boys

¹ The 'term 'white' was used by the volunteer to identify herself as belonging to the Caucasian race. In this study context, 'white' could also imply first-language English speaking, educated, with access to privilege.

were struggling academically and needed support in reading. M's mum suggested she use the Language- Literacy support programme to assist these boys. M was shocked to realise that at high-school level these learners did not have any sound letter knowledge. This led her to think about how she could incorporate the programme into her non-profit work, and she began to implement the programme through a local school, training teachers to use this programme with their Grade 4 learners. M also felt that the church which she led with her husband should be involved in some social justice projects so that the church could uplift the community in a really simple way. M was one of the foundational volunteers who pioneered the reading programme at the DCYCC. Beginning her volunteer work in April 2016, she is a committed and dedicated volunteer who has been volunteering at the home for three years. She enjoys interacting with the children at their level. M believes that children who struggle at school will battle with confidence and self-worth and hopes to help change this emotional burden on children who battle academically. She gets satisfaction from seeing the delight on each child's face as well as improvement in their reading skills, particularly in the confidence with which they approach their work. From a personal growth point of view, M places huge value on the act of service and believes that she gains as much from the children as she gives to them.

Volunteer 2, R

R is a 22-year-old single woman living in Glenwood, Durban. She lives with her mum, dad and sister. Her mum is a teacher at a primary school. After finishing her matric at a private school in Durban, she studied architecture at UCT. She is currently enjoying a break from her studies for a year before she returns to Cape Town to complete her postgraduate degree in city planning. Her gap year has been quite structured; she has been working in Rwanda for five months as an intern on a coffee bean farm. She enjoyed this time for the rest that it offered her and for the independence and confidence that she developed as a woman travelling in an African country alone. She now works at a non- governmental organisation (NGO) in the city centre of Durban. Her current work involves identifying problems and coming up with solutions for some of the challenges faced by those dwelling in city centres. Some project highlights for her have been an urban design project for a group of informal traders, as well as partnering with the World Health Organization for women who live in city centres but want to be able to breastfeed. Her year away from studies has allowed her to realise what her true passions and interests are. She has really enjoyed doing work that is beneficial to the community and has also enjoyed being able to write more frequently, a passion of hers. She is excited to pursue her postgraduate degree as she is interested in social justice issues related to architecture. Her other passions include cooking, baking and gardening. She loves

living in coastal towns and spending time with her family and friends. She heard about the Language- Literacy support programme through two friends that were sharing anecdotes about some of the funny things that had happened while volunteering. She was interested to find out more about this programme and completed the training to allow her to become a volunteer. This training time was eye opening for her as she had tutored English previously, but at high-school level. She found it challenging to return to understanding the core foundational level of phonics. She loves the easy-to-follow teaching method that the programme offers. Aside from the reading progress, a huge motivation for volunteering has been developing a relationship with the young girl she teaches. She has enjoyed the challenge of identifying her child's interests, strengths and weaknesses and seeing how she can adapt her teaching style to meet these needs. She has found it humbling to be reminded of the reality of the situations that some of the children in South Africa face, and volunteering has allowed her to develop greater empathy and to realise how privileged her upbringing was. She believes there is a massive opportunity for programmes such as this to help bridge the gap of education in our country and wants to help break the cycle of poverty that so many people find themselves trapped in. R is a patient person who is passionate about contributing to others. Living in a positive way, she believes that volunteering is as rewarding for the volunteers as it is for the kids.

Volunteer 3, M

M is a 47-year-old unmarried woman. She was born in Johannesburg but moved to Durban when she was seven. She had a very stable and safe childhood; she has lived in the same house for 27 years. She studied architectural technology at Technikon Natal. After university she moved to Knysna for seven years and then back to Durban when her dad became ill. She describes herself as having a love-hate relationship with her work, finding much to be frustrated about regarding excellence and efficiency in the construction industry. In her dream job she would prefer more flexibility. If she did not have to work for a salary, she dreams of living a life of volunteering and travelling, and would love to own a book shop. M describes herself as an avid reader. Her dad was an avid history reader and she recalls that he would always have a book of some sort that he was reading. She professes to be a bit of a 'book snob', preferring to purchase all her reading material rather than borrowing from libraries. She likes to try new hobbies and crafts, and recently enrolled in a woodwork course. She has previously dabbled in pottery, mosaics, crocheting and knitting. She is trying to teach herself greater levels of perseverance as her character is one that tends to start new things and not finish a project. She heard about the language - literacy programme through her local church. As a keen reader, her interest was piqued at the mention of a reading programme as she believes every

child should learn how to read. As a person who is afraid to make a commitment, the close location of the DCYCC to her home made her think that it would be something that might be easy to do. Although volunteering is something she has always thought about doing, this is her first experience of volunteering. In a season between projects at work, she found herself with a lot of spare time and decided to do something to add value to the lives of others instead. She has found the English and isiZulu language barrier the most difficult part of volunteering. M believes that she can make a difference in a child's life just by teaching the child to read, thereby giving that child a good foundation and academic grounding. Although she has only been volunteering for a few months, she is happy to notice confidence in her own ability growing and can see the child that she teaches start to come out of her shell and relax around her, which makes the connection easier.

Volunteer 4, V

V is a 35-year-old musician living in Glenwood, Durban. She is unmarried and lives alone. She grew up in Fish Hoek in Cape Town as an only child of a father who worked as a pastor and mother who worked as a teacher. In the small town where she grew up, she had a steady set of friends from a young age. Her mom was an English teacher by profession but worked in the church, leading Bible studies and worship groups. Her mother died when V was only 18. V is a professional musician and she plays the French horn in the KZN philharmonic orchestra. As part of her daily work she plays in concerts all around the city of Durban, in old age homes, in educational concerts and symphony concerts in season, and at the city hall. In her free afternoons she teaches piano lessons at a local primary school and has been doing so for five years. She loves the flexibility that her job offers her as well as the joy that she can bring to others through the gift of music. She loves to see the children she teaches piano to have a sense of achievement at what they have learned through music and develop a sense of pride in their ability. V is an outdoor person; she is not afraid to try new things and has recently taken up surfing and paddling. An avid hiker, she spends many weekends exploring the beauty of the Drakensberg mountain range. In the beginning of 2018, V had an epiphany. She began to be increasingly aware that everything she did was for herself or in her own interests, and that there was nothing she was doing for other people without remuneration. For about two weeks, the word 'orphan' reverberated through songs or in books she was reading. Believing it was not just coincidence, she recorded the word 'orphan' in her journal in the hope that she would understand why she was being made aware of this word. At her local church, the language-literacy support programme was advertised and she believed it was an indication that this was a programme she could become involved in. On further investigation she realised it worked in her schedule and therefore she signed up to become a volunteer for the

programme in April 2018. She loves interacting with the children at the home, seeing how enthusiastic they are to read a story together or noticing how grateful they are to have someone who intentionally spends time with them. She feels one hour a week is a small sacrifice of her time and wishes that she could spend more time with them. V has developed unique friendships with the children that she teaches and goes out of her way to care for them if they have any needs. V believes that her teaching experience with her music lessons has helped her to develop the skills to manage children. She takes her firm boundaries as a direct influence from her mom, who was a teacher. The one skill that she possesses is a love of reading and she hopes to pass this gift to others. She recalls fond memories of being read to by her mom every night and then going to the library as a special outing with her mom as a child. She sees herself as being generous with her time and loves to help people.

Volunteer 5, K

K is a 29-year-old female, living in Morningside, Durban, with her husband. She grew up in an intact family with one younger brother. Her mother is a dance teacher and was involved in their church, leading worship and training in dance. Her father is an engineer who used to work for Transnet. She recalls having an awareness of the injustice and disparity in living conditions in South Africa. While her mom taught dancing, she would play outside in the gardens and noticed a homeless family who lived close by. She befriended the children and played with them each week. At this young age she was aware of how privileged her life was. As a high-school student, she became involved in an outreach programme to an orphanage, and would visit the orphanage once a week in her Grade 11 and 12 years. After school she became involved in the Bright Stars mentorship programme. This is a youth mentorship programme that pairs vulnerable youth with a trained adult mentor to assist them in their journey of life and to help increase their confidence and self-esteem through being a good adult role model. This was one of her more challenging seasons as a volunteer as she was paired with a shy girl and the programme was not very structured. After two years she stopped volunteering there as it became a frustration to ideate fresh ideas. She left South Africa to travel and taught English in Taiwan for a year. Returning to South Africa, she met her future husband and they got married. As a couple they enjoy seeing their friends and family and spending time together at weekends. K works as a financial advisor at an independent broker and currently is completing a postgraduate diploma in financial planning. It was through church that she heard about the language-literacy support programme and decided that this was a volunteer opportunity that was just down her alley, as she enjoys connecting with someone relationally, and having something structured to do together each week. Her good friend heads up an organisation which sets up libraries in underprivileged schools, and she has attended some of these launch days

with her. It was here that her interest in literacy and reading was sparked as she became aware of how poorly resourced classrooms in South Africa can be and realised how critical it is to assist children with reading skills in their foundational years. K has been volunteering at the DCYCC for six months, where she has learned patience and grace as she helps her young boy with his reading skills. She enjoys this programme as it is based on relationships and time, and the fact that there is nothing in it for her. She feels strongly that everyone should consider sacrificing their time or skills for the benefit of others in this way. Although she doesn't always feel qualified as a 'teacher' in terms of reading skills, she is delighted to see progress in skills each week and hopes to instil a desire for reading in him and grow his confidence in his own ability.

Volunteer 6, A

A is a 26-year-old female. She is married and lives with her husband in Morningside. A works as a speech therapist at a remedial school. She grew up in Durban with her family. Her mom is a pre-school teacher, her dad an accountant, and her two younger sisters are all studying medical-related degrees. As a family the value of generosity was always highlighted and she recalls many instances of going to underprivileged environments to play with babies, do holiday clubs and give in terms of money, time or resources. A studied at UCT, and during her years in Cape Town she was involved in a local church. One of the outreach programmes was to go to a local children's home in the evenings and read bedtime stories. This was where her history of volunteering began. After completing her community service year on the south coast of KZN, she returned to Durban. At the time her mom was making use of her spare time and had begun volunteering, using the language-literacy support programme. They began to chat about the programme, sharing ideas, and using their respective professional backgrounds to engage children in this content more actively. The church that A belonged to was also looking for a way in which it could uplift its local community. Across the road from the church is the DCYCC, so A thought about a way to use the reading programme to benefit the children living at the DCYCC. A volunteers as she wants to give back to those around her. She also believes her life is meant for more than just her own needs. As someone who grew up in a very privileged environment, she is even more aware of the opportunities she has been allowed and would love to uplift others. Her year of community service in a rural setting really enlightened her on the major literacy needs in our country and ignited her passion to try to improve this crisis. A considers herself to have a helping personality; she is likely to volunteer in any capacity, often giving up her time for others. However, to be able to combine her professional skills with a volunteer project has made this volunteer opportunity even more purposeful. Although she recharges by being alone and in her own head, she also loves to exercise with others,

and her close relationships with her friends and family are very important to her. Her highlights of this programme have been developing friendships with each child, as well as hearing from the caregivers that there has been academic progress in the classroom. Her commitment and dedication have been an asset to the programme, and she hopes to be a consistent presence in these children's lives.

These bionarrative summaries give insight into the identify of volunteers and the different factors that influence their decision to volunteer, motivation to continue volunteering and some of the specifics that enabled them to enter into a collaboration.

4.2 Value for literacy

A common understanding of the literacy crisis in South Africa was a major contributing factor motivating each volunteer's participation in the programme. Volunteers in this study showed insight into the children's education difficulties faced in South Africa and demonstrated a strong commitment to literacy. At least 5 of the volunteers identified themselves as avid readers, and almost all of them had many positive associations attached to reading. They therefore wanted to share this love of reading with others. Their commitment to volunteering could be credited to the fact that the programme promoted one of their passions.

I really do feel passionate about literacy. I think just seeing that if children are struggling with literacy later on it impacts them throughout their schooling career ... and I think that really affects their confidence and their self-worth, so although it's an academic thing it can also really affect kids emotionally. [P1, Volunteer S]

Other highlights have been the caregivers coming to us with the kids' reports to show us that [their] teachers have commented on improvement in reading, so that sort of feedback has been really nice. [P6, Volunteer A]

4.3 Positive experience of volunteering

All of the volunteers in this programme had a history of volunteering and had previously been involved in similar volunteer-type programmes. Their experiences ranged from a few months of volunteering to more than five years of volunteering. Many volunteers had

exposure to volunteering during their childhood, through their own acts or those of their immediate family. A history of a positive previous experience with volunteering was common to most of the volunteers, which made this sample group unique, as volunteering was something they were familiar with and had clear expectations about. This may have impacted on their longevity as a volunteer. It was interesting to note that three of the volunteers came from families with parents that were involved in education or were involved in outreach-type initiatives.

So, growing up in the church gave me insight into helping people less fortunate. [P5, Volunteer K]

My dad was a pastor but he's now retired, and my mum was an English teacher but she worked more in the church leading Bible studies and worship groups and that sort of thing. [P4, Volunteer V]

4.4 Awareness of common good

The notion of common good and carrying a sense of civic responsibility was strong among the volunteer group. The volunteers all expressed their commitment to the programme as a result of forming strong relational bonds with the children in the programme and wanting to give back to the community. This personality trait of empathy, care and wanting to develop another as well as a sense of spiritual grounding seems common to all volunteers in this group which may explain the unique cohesion of the group and dedication to the programme.

I think it's [volunteering] good for you as it is for the kid so from like a personal growth point of view it's really good to do something that is sacrificial. [P1, Volunteer S]

So, I think getting involved in something that is more a relationship and time and like there's nothing in it for me – I think that's so important. I just think especially with literacy and education issues in our country we should all be doing something like this. [P5, Volunteer K]

But I think the individual connection is something that I place a high value on. Just seeing the kid's eyes light up when we walk in has been very special. [P6, Volunteer A]

Volunteers in this study held some commonalities in that each of them would consider themselves to be religious and find meaning and purpose from serving others.

We wanted it [the volunteer programme] to be in the community, for our church to impact the community in a really simple way. [P1, Volunteer S]

It was clear that the volunteers gain meaning from seeing a positive shift in each child's reading skills and from building trust and relationships with these children. This is something that makes them potentially sustainable volunteers. There was a sense of civic responsibility among these volunteers who wanted to contribute to society in a meaningful way. Their caring qualities resulted in their being drawn to a vulnerable population to see them flourish through a programme that upskilled them.

4.5 Political awareness of their role in reducing inequality

Some of South Africa's history also plays a part in identifying the type of person that is likely to volunteer. In this study, there was a definite understanding and awareness of some of the educational disparities that are present in South Africa as a result of the apartheid regime. These volunteers see their efforts in volunteering as a means of offering a small reconciliation to help bridge some of the gaps that are evident in the country, years after apartheid. Strong feelings of despair at a failed democratic system and blatant discrimination can be used in a powerful way as a source of passion for helping to see justice in people's lives, and this can be established through volunteer programmes.

Because being able to read with competence can unlock so many opportunities for underprivileged kids. We have to create environments where we have greater equality in South Africa. If the programme has a high success rate, we are closer to achieving this. [P5, Volunteer K]

I think it's a cool opportunity for reconciliation. With the mentoring programme, I think there's a lot of older white people with a lot of experience who can pass it on to the younger generation [P1, Volunteer S]

I think for me ... being privileged and having a good education and a loving home and opportunities makes me more grateful and wanting to match up some of the other disparities I see in that regard. [P6, Volunteer A]

There is a common sense of importance in this type of programme as volunteers feel passionate about giving these children the opportunity to learn to read and therefore be educated. Intervention programmes provide a visible and accessible response to the consequences of an apartheid system.

4.6 Relationship among volunteers

The action cycle of this study was conducive to exploring if a collaboration was occurring and what kind of collaborative process was happening. The cyclic points of meeting to share ideas, discuss concerns and frustrations, come up with solutions and reflect on actions allowed the opportunity for collaboration. The first point in this process was to develop relationships among volunteers. Sharing a brief personal background through the bionarratives with one another was important; it gave a sense of understanding others' perspectives and points of view and the volunteers drew from this knowledge throughout the action cycle. The interaction between the participants was interesting to observe in terms of relationship development. The general communication of the first focus group session was very friendly, positive, and filled with personal narratives of experiences during volunteering; there was a light-hearted and jovial atmosphere in the group and the connection between each volunteer seemed natural as evidenced by laughter shared and jokes and stories told. This process formed a great foundation of safety and trust among the volunteers and resulted in a conversational mode that was more focused on solutions, actions and ideas during the second focus group.

4.7 Importance of a process that is structured and led

Volunteers seemed to respond well to a form of structure, both in the specific layout of the reading intervention programme and also in the structure of the action cycle process. The knowledge that they could implement a set programme allowed them the freedom to be prepared for the lesson and promised greater sustainability and longevity to their

volunteering. The volunteers also felt that the repetitive nature of the activities enabled the children who were participating in the reading programme to feel more confident about their expectations of the volunteer coming in each week.

It is nice that it is so structured, and you can see that the kids recognise the structure.
[P2, Volunteer R]

I'm glad this programme has a set syllabus, so I don't have to come up with ideas. [P3, Volunteer M]

It's good that they (the children) get lots of repetition so that they know what to expect each week. [P6, Volunteer A]

4.8 The speech therapist as a catalyst to the collaborative process

The speech-language therapist played an important role in this research as a catalyst to the process of collaboration. The critical skills of the therapist could support the group with knowledge of language and literacy development. Just as each group member drew on her particular skill sets to add value to the group, so the SLT could add value with her own insight. This was pertinent to this group because of the nature of the literacy programme. Each volunteer had formed her own perspectives on literacy development based on her individual literacy facilitation sessions each week; however, when the SLT added insight into literacy development, this was approached with much greater caution. The volunteers referenced the use of the SLT's advice during their reflections which shows evidence that they were making use of suggestions by the SLT.

I can add more value just because of the knowledge that I have ... to be able to tie two things together, to volunteer and to help in something that I am skilled at – it just makes it more purposeful for me. [P6, Volunteer A]

In the example below, a suggestion is made by a volunteer who references the SLT as someone she has sought insight on the topic from. The SLT then adds understanding regarding the theory behind language development and the idea is able to be modified and action taken.

I know A, we've spoken about whether we should buy some books for the home so that the kids are kind of engaging with the vocab and reading during the week or is it just gonna get trashed and lost. [P4, Volunteer M]

I think it needs to be controlled. [P2, Volunteer 2]

Cos I think if its paired reading, so reading with an adult what you're offering them is increasing their awareness of words and making their world a lot bigger you know and that's where they're gonna get the vocab from. I don't think necessarily just reading a book, it's more about setting up the story and the discussions that happen together. [P6, Volunteer A]

Maybe we should set up the reading corner so that it's more controlled with a locked door and then there's like a set time in the week when [adult] volunteers can go in and read with them. [P1, Volunteer S]

One of the difficulties with programmes that are implemented by volunteers is that volunteers do not necessarily have adequate training or experience in the field of work that they choose to volunteer in. They gain this experience through time spent volunteering. This presents an issue as some volunteers felt it would be beneficial to have access to greater levels of information regarding facilitating literacy development. The volunteers were all in agreement that they would like more information regarding literacy development norms and strategies on how best to teach certain concepts. Some volunteers were also aware of other difficulties, such as letter-formation difficulties or reversals, and asked for assistance on whether to address these.

The thing that I'm battling with is like P is a 6-year-old, actually understanding what a 6-year-old knows and not having too high of an expectation on what she can achieve. [P5, Volunteer K]

And then also like how much do I stop him when he's like trying to read a story and correct the word? Go through it and break it up – how often should I be doing that? [P4, Volunteer, V]

The SLT was able to give specific insight into these areas which helped the volunteers in their language facilitation methods. The role of the SLT as a catalyst in the process of collaboration is critical; the professional knowledge regarding language and literacy development brought a focus and direction to the discussion and resulted in more actions

being taken. Through being able to answer specific questions related to literacy development, volunteers had easy access to information. This accelerated the action cycle process as solutions were quickly found and adaptations in facilitating literacy support were made.

It is important for SLTs to consider that a volunteer may feel overwhelmed when considering participating in a literacy-related intervention such as this. SLTs are well trained in child development, small-group behaviour management, and literacy norms, as well as possessing a host of other important information. It should not be expected that volunteers who do not have this professional background should be aware of some of these basic skills that seem innate to SLTs. Volunteers require ongoing support and training, not specific to the details of the literacy intervention or programme but regarding managing small groups, behaviour management and other secondary factors which can affect the success of an intervention.

4.9 Relationship with each child

Another unique component of this research group is that the volunteers share a unique relationship with the children they teach and consider it a privilege to be working with each child. The vulnerable nature of each child may mean that there is greater and faster establishment of an emotional connection between volunteers and children in the programme. The volunteers relate to each child in an empathetic way and value the relationship that they have with their child. This makes conversation and connection more meaningful as there is a safety and trust which strengthens the communication that is shared and may assist with language acquisition. There is also benefit in having built up a relationship with a particular child; the expectations of the routine of the lesson are similar each time; there is an element of rapport that has been built up with time and this means that there can be maximum benefit from each lesson to be able to teach the child well.

We've been going for an extended period of time and have been able to build up a relationship with the kids which I found made the sessions more productive as well as there being the opportunity to get to know each other. [P2, Volunteer R]

I think there is and it's not just by reading. I think it's just by being a person there for the kids, just someone who spends time with them individually. [P3, Volunteer M]

If they [the children] are emotionally healthy ultimately, they can learn better. [P6, Volunteer A]

4.10 Benefit of shared positive experience

Through the sharing of experiences, there was a sense of common good that was shared among volunteers. The volunteers shared their achievements after using some of the suggestions that were made in the first focus group. There is benefit from sharing and reinforcing positive experiences among volunteers which enables the collaborative experience to strengthen and be maximised.

What I've been doing with P is that she really likes to colour in, so if she's like done a sound or the word correctly then I say she can colour in a bit of the picture ... this week she tried a lot harder ... it was good to try and encourage. [P3, Volunteer M]

The volunteer's independent thinking also improved as volunteers began to take initiative and extend some of the suggestions made by other group members. Through the experience of sharing stories in a collaborative setting, more creative ideas were sparked that could eventually lead to greater literacy gains.

4.11 Vulnerability helped the development of a collaboration

There was a sense of common relief among volunteers to be able to share their difficulties with one another. The vulnerability of one volunteer opening up to her own experiences of challenges allowed others to express that they too were having difficulties in the same area. Instead of continuing to teach in the same manner, the volunteers were then able to make suggestions and come up with ideas as to how to change their approach. The volunteers involved had taken ownership of these concerns and could offer ways in which they had tried to overcome them. They had taken practical steps and tried to be creative in their literacy support methods to overcome these difficulties and were willing to share these with

the group even if they had not been successful. Vulnerability in a group context is essential to develop trust among one other.

Yeah, I definitely think there's some room for like some contextualisation on some of those [words] so finding examples that are a little bit more relevant. [P5, Volunteer K]

I did um, two weeks ago, the hard words. I like put little stars next to ... and then in the middle of [the] lesson I said we mustn't forget to do the hard words but then I completely forgot. [P3, Volunteer M]

I mean vocab is something that everyone has mentioned in our chats cos I think it's such a big thing with [English] second language learners ... it is difficult I know when it has come up in my lessons. I've tried to like you say explain the word but you can't do this for a word in each sentence so I'll just hit the words that I think are the most relevant for the child's age and world experiences ... I would probably think about their life – put yourself in their shoes and try to think about what they have experienced. [P6 Volunteer A]

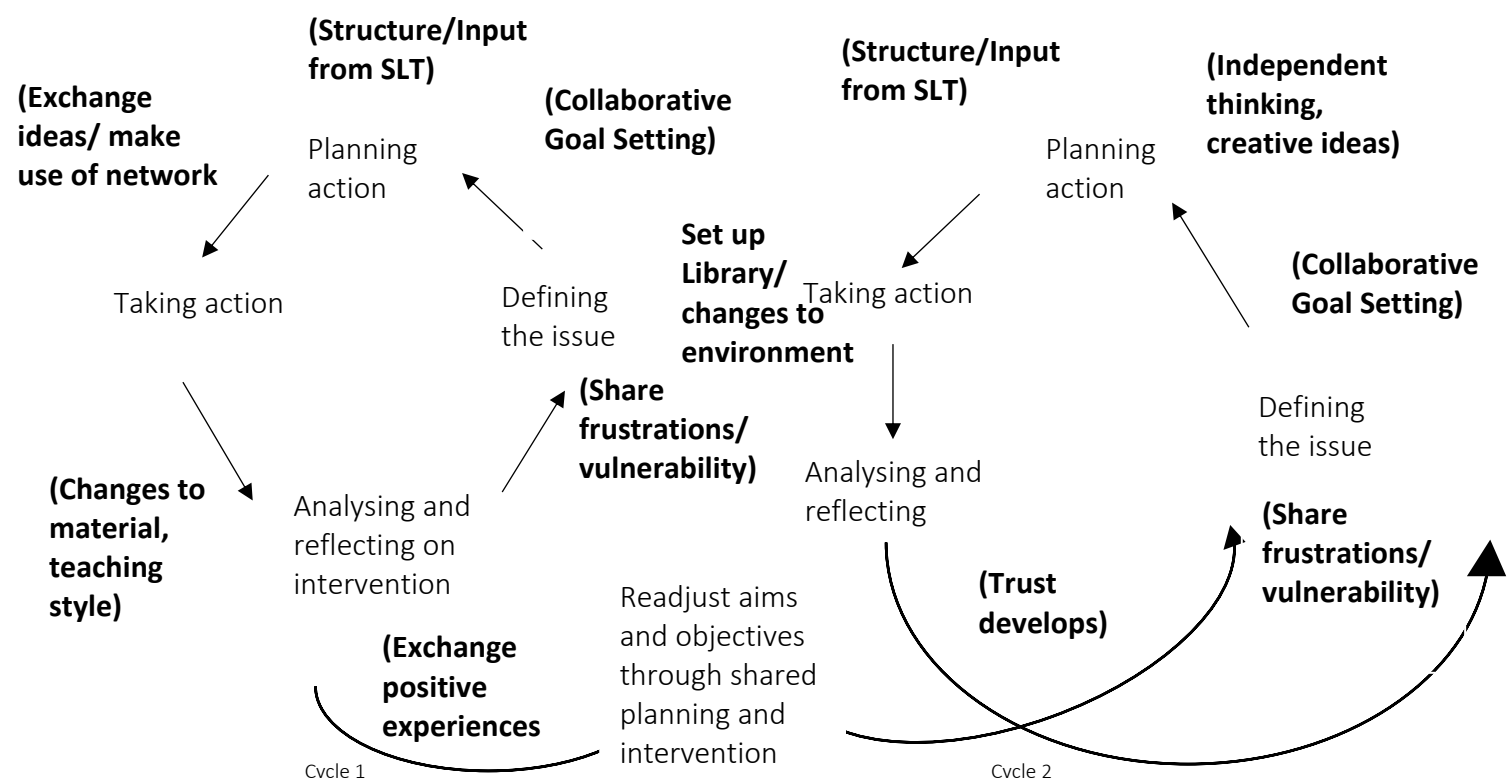


Figure 1. Underlying processes that facilitate collaboration during the action cycle process

4.12 Collaboration centred around a common frustration

It is important to understand how the volunteers address their challenges and frustrations as this develops into a collaboration. Most of the volunteers were concerned with communication challenges that arose as a result of the disparity between the first language of the children involved in the programme, isiZulu, and language of instruction of the programme, English. This common point of frustration among volunteers acted as a point of focus for the solutions and ideas that were given. The collaboration strengthened because there was a point of frustration that arose among volunteers to try to improve the intervention. The programme used is taught in English and the children involved in the programme are first language isiZulu speakers who attend English-medium schools. Without any formal training in additional or second-language acquisition, the volunteers were astute to ascertain that there was an element of difficulty in facilitating reading and concepts to children in their second language, many commenting on the challenge of reading new words together that held little relevance to the children's worldviews or experiences. This was an area of common concern and volunteers were eager to discuss ways in which this affects their lessons. They were eager to brainstorm ideas on how to address these difficulties.

It's just a general lack of vocab [in English] and obviously all of those words are important for learning to read but I don't know a way of trying to reinforce what those words mean. [P2, Volunteer R]

Volunteers were willing and eager to share their experiences of teaching new vocabulary to the children and were able to share their experiences. A sense of engagement from volunteers came after sharing a common issue, deliberating the frustrations of this issue, and then giving suggestions on how to manage these problems. Identifying the issues together in this setting meant that brainstorming of solutions could occur.

4.13 Using network to collaborate with others

Extending the network of influence and knowledge was also crucial to the development of a collaboration. Coming together, exchanging backgrounds and stories allowed for the sharing of minds and therefore critical access points to a wider variety of people. Through the discussion times that were had in the group among the volunteers, people were able to give

suggestions and personal references of specific people and organisations that could benefit the intervention programme and improve literacy. Volunteers in the group had direct relationships with people who could add value to the project based on their skillset or relational network.

R suggested that I make contact with her mum, who is the vice principal at MS [local school in Durban], because their matrices are looking for a new outreach venture for 2019. [P6, Volunteer A]

The suggestion above was made in relation to the need to extend the programme and make it more sustainable. Contact was made with the principal of a local primary school in the area to extend an invitation for partnership in volunteering at the children's home in the future.

My friend R runs the Learn Project and they set up libraries in underprivileged schools within Durban. [P2, Volunteer R]

The connection here was made by a volunteer whose friend runs a Non- Profit Organisation (NPO). A conversation began with this initiative to see if they would be able to donate books to form a reading nook to aid language and literacy development among the children. Collaboration creates exposure to a wider variety of people who have a network of contacts. It is beneficial to make use of a variety of resources as they can add value to projects and improve them.

4.14 Valuing different perspectives and knowledge sources

Through the process of meeting together, trust was formed among volunteers. This sense of unity meant that there was a level of openness between one another as they grew to know and understand one another. Allowing relational development moments of interaction among the volunteers was a critical point for developing the profile of volunteers and to promote strength in unity.

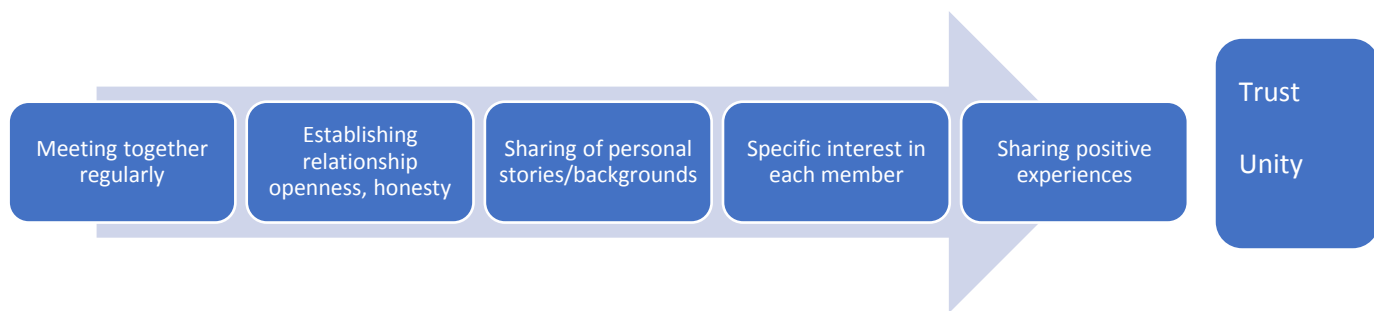


Figure 2. Factors which influence the process of trust development

Allowing the volunteers to share their backgrounds was useful as it allowed volunteers to have insight into other worlds and be more perceptive to other points of reference. This was the starting point of collaborating – establishing relationships among volunteers.

Throughout the process of collaboration, it was interesting to see volunteers take note of and acknowledge other volunteers by their background work. This data is critical as it showed that there was a level of interest in each person as a volunteer. This established a foundation of trust among the volunteers as well as a connection point for networking.

Yeah, I think it's like just the different industries that people come from sort of gives them a different perspective; you know like M, who's a music teacher so she brings her own perspective and ideas even like just with those little books. Yeah, so I think it's always interesting to hear from others. You know she teaches normally and I don't, so even just to hear what she has to say and you from a speech [SLT] perspective. [P1, Volunteer S]

I think that different volunteers brought different contributions to the programme. [P2, Volunteer R]

As the process of the data collection continued, I could begin to see an ease to the interactions among the volunteers at each point of connection, namely, focus groups, and during the weekly literacy facilitation session. There was a relaxed and easy-going manner in the volunteers' interactions, evidenced by laughter as well as sharing of funny stories about the children during lessons. This personalisation of their experiences when shared in a relaxed manner between volunteers formed good foundations of friendship. Moments to foster relatability among one another were important to help create points of interest and commonality. Although some of the group members were known to each other in a very

casual way, this was not the case for all members and the group seemed unique in their speed to form good relationships and the natural way in which they worked together.

Through being able to come together and share the aspects of volunteering that brought volunteers the greatest joy and satisfaction seemed to elicit a greater sense of meaning and purpose to volunteering. It was interesting to note that it was not always the improvement in literacy progress that was a driving force behind volunteering but often a more human-relatability and eagerness to see consistent and small changes in character in each child. It was helpful to start the collaboration from a positive sense, identifying the strengths at work in the programme.

I think a confidence that it gives them that someone is coming for them, listening and caring for them, ja, encouraging them, and I have noticed such a difference in him when I do give positive reinforcement. [P5, Volunteer, K]

I think that is also one of the advantages of this programme is that we are 1:1 and you know sometimes these Neema lessons are run in a big classroom so for us it's nice to notice that individual progress. We can really see it, maybe not always on an academic level but just on an emotional level. To be able to see that growth and the friendship that we develop with the kids is quite cool. [P6, Volunteer, A]

When meeting to discuss a volunteer project, building up camaraderie and a sense of unity among volunteers by getting to know one another and discussing the strengths of the volunteer programme is a useful place to start.

4.15 Developing a self-critical ability to reflect as a means of improving literacy facilitation.

To be able to reflect critically on their teaching styles enabled the volunteers to evaluate the needs of the programme; it enabled them to take initiative and ownership of their own facilitation of literacy. The power of this collaborative process was to be able to be confident to follow through on some of the ideas that had been shared and to enter into creative problem solving. In a sense, these volunteers began to develop their own skills using their passion and emotional involvement as a driving force behind their learning through the process of reflection. Through self-reflection, volunteers took ownership of the actions of self and others.

I checked and he knew the 'bed' trick for b and d. This did seem to help when he applied it. [P4, Volunteer V]

Concentration for the duration of the lesson can also be tricky – as she gets easily distracted and 'wiggly'. This however probably shows that I should be engaging with her in more creative ways. [P1, Volunteer S]

Another point of reflection for the volunteers was to consider something that they had seen being modelled by another volunteer during the session. This reflection was meant to encourage volunteers to become more aware of one another while supporting their child, as there is often much to be learned through observation of others. This was an important point in the action cycle process, reflecting and growing in awareness of others around them. When a volunteer sees another volunteer engaging with the child in a certain way, she may find herself more likely to adopt that teaching style or behaviour and implement it in her session. The process of the action cycle enables peer learning as well as learning from the children to occur, which facilitates the process of collaboration.

Something I saw another learner do that I want to try, is to seat the learner at a smaller table and chair. [P3, Volunteer M]

4.16 Actions at a programme level

Ultimately, the process of collaboration was evidenced by the actions that were taken in the programme. There was evidence of collaborative goal setting as volunteers identified and prioritised some of the challenges that would have the most functional outcomes if they were eliminated. The changes that were made to the programme or style of literacy facilitation were proof that the volunteers had come together in a collaboration. One of the main concerns was surrounding vocabulary – how to explain words and how to make this relevant to the children. Some volunteers suggested using images to assist with vocabulary retention. Following this, a change was made to the way in which all the material for the literacy intervention was printed and now all the printed material includes hand-drawn images of some of the vocabulary for each lesson. Through the suggestion of volunteers acknowledging a common issue of vocabulary difficulties for the children, an action was able to be followed, and a small change made to the material printed. This will enable the

volunteers to explain new vocabulary with greater ease and will also give the children a visual aid to enable greater retention of the vocabulary. It was insightful of the volunteers to realise that they can't just teach words in isolation but must make meaning of words to facilitate language and literacy development.

It made it easier to explain new words when I could show the picture as a reference.

[P6, Volunteer A]

Volunteers also shared common concerns regarding the learning environment and maintaining the focus and attention of the learners. The physical setting of the reading programme is not always conducive to learning as it can be noisy with many distractions. Learners are also often tired after a long day at school and maintaining their attention for the reading programme can be challenging. A suggestion that was made was to help reduce the environmental noise within the facility by moving venues within the home to a smaller and more isolated private location. This could allow for better focus and attention of the children which should enable them to retain more from the lesson and in turn mean that they are able to make gains in literacy faster.

We were in a quieter room, he focused better. [P4, Volunteer V]

Volunteers were more willing to make use of a suggestion when it had come from another volunteer, someone they trusted, someone whose opinion was deemed to be authentic as they had experience in using the programme and working with the children. One of the advantages of collaboration is that there is immediate buy-in from other volunteers; they take note of ideas and suggestions and act by implementing some of these actions.

I used to ... bring a dice and the kid would roll to choose which one they would read. Also, another easy thing is to make them the teacher... so they have to attend to the lesson and listen out for the sounds. That sometimes helps. Another thing is the timing element, the competitive thing; some of them love that. I would show him a countdown and see how far he gets. [P6, Volunteer A]

The one thing I've learnt is to tie my hair up, take my jewellery off, and watch because anything on my body, she is like 'can I touch this, what is this?' I try to be as little of a distraction. [P2, Volunteer R]

What I have found [helpful] is to sit at the small table; when we are at the big table, she's so small she doesn't sit properly so the one day she actually almost slipped off her chair. She did a lot better [at the small table] because she was sitting properly, and her concentration was a lot better actually. [P3, Volunteer, M]

The volunteers were able to share ideas and creative solutions that they had found helpful to keep their learners' attention during the programme. These were all discussed conversationally during a focus group, and volunteers could decide if they would like to implement them.

4.17 Actions at a volunteer level

During collaboration, it was interesting to note some changes in the role of the volunteers. They changed from being agents of action, to showing a genuine concern for the sustainability and long-term improvement of the programme and development of each child. Their energy towards the programme did not diminish; rather their passion became more apparent as they took ownership of the outcomes of the programme and showed commitment to its improvement.

4.18 Fostering a love of reading

Volunteers began to desire to see more than just simply improvement in reading skills, but rather something more holistic, a development of a love of reading. This shows a deep level of thoughtfulness and engagement from the volunteers who were interested in the longevity of the skills taught in the programme. When engaged in an open and honest conversation, their ideas and solutions proposed became more about developing something in each child that would allow for better learning to take place. A child with an active, engaged and critical mind who is eager and finds joy in learning will be more receptive to being taught and may experience greater learning outcomes.

Should we buy some books for the home so that the kids are kind of engaging with the vocab and reading during the week? [P1, Volunteer, S]

4.19 Sustainability

An awareness of and a desire to improve sustainability of the project were also evidenced through the action cycle and collaboration. Sustainability refers to ensuring that a process can be maintained at a level for a period of time. The current volunteers were aware of some of the restrictions that come with being so heavily reliant on a volunteer-driven programme. Volunteers were thinking of ways in which language could continue to be extended in the home, even when the volunteers were no longer present.

I was also thinking about that like are there DVDs that they can watch that are vocab specific like designed to target language. [P1, Volunteer S]

The need for greater numbers of volunteers to be involved in these types of programmes was also highlighted by the volunteers. Volunteers were grateful for the positive experiences they had as volunteers and wanted other people to be able to experience those same feelings. The common high value of empathy that was shared among volunteers enabled each volunteer to relate with the individual person that they were teaching a skill through the intervention. Instead of viewing volunteering through the construct of time or of literacy support, they viewed it through an empathetic lens and considered the person. This idea of showing the personal side of volunteering, highlighting the positive emotional expectations, should be considered when recruiting for volunteer-led projects. Emotional expectations may affect how much people identify with the volunteer role, even before any actual volunteering takes place.

I wish we could inspire other people to get involved in a project like this – it's one hour a week and it can change someone's life. [P3, Volunteer M]

It could also encourage other volunteers to join, if it's seamless, well run, exciting, user friendly [and] simple to interpret. [P5, Volunteer K]

So, we can be more impactful, so volunteers don't feel like they are wasting their time but that they feel like what they are doing is being impactful and to maximise on that 45 min a week and make it as beneficial as possible for the kids. [P1, Volunteer S]

Even in the home there are clearly more kids in need than there are volunteers, so improving the functioning of the programme could hopefully make it more accessible

for a wider group of volunteers to take part and therefore have a bigger reach. [P2, Volunteer R]

Volunteers were willing to share some of their own hesitation in becoming involved in this kind of project. This type of information is valuable as it can inform interventions and programmes that are reliant on volunteers on how to communicate their volunteer expectations clearly. Some of the possible reasons that people would be hesitant to be involved in this type of programme as suggested in the focus-group discussion are outlined below.

I think it's the unknown. [P5, Volunteer K]

Ja, I was so nervous before I started, that I wasn't going to be qualified enough. [P4, Volunteer V]

Through this discussion, it was decided that a video would be made which would serve as an information tool to communicate clearly what the expectations for a volunteer were who wanted to be involved in this type of programme. It also provided context to the physical location of the intervention and allowed insight into what constituted volunteering. Another suggestion was to have a time when people could experience a session of observing a volunteer session without any obligation to be involved.

We could always invite people to a looking-in time – if you're interested, come with us this Wednesday – like an open week. [P1, Volunteer S]

Volunteers value clear expectations before they can commit to being involved in projects. This information is valuable as it informs future volunteers on how best to recruit new volunteers successfully.

4.20 Benefit of the process of working together

All the volunteers agreed that they had enjoyed the process of working together as a team. They found it helpful to hear ideas from other people and discuss some of the problems together.

I found it really helpful to be able to talk with the other volunteers about the reading programme and learn about how they tackled certain issues, or different methods of teaching. [P2, Volunteer R]

I think it was really helpful, really beneficial to hear everybody else's ideas and discuss problems – what does work and what doesn't work. [P4 Volunteer V]

Volunteers also enjoyed gathering together as it allowed them to meet and become familiar with some of the other volunteers. It seemed to be encouraging to get to know some of the volunteers better through these meeting times as they could identify commonalities in personality traits as they shared ideas. This process of sharing ideas has continued even outside of the research study. It was interesting for them to realise how similar they are to one another, even though they were not friends or had no relationship prior to volunteering. Getting to know one another on a personal level and finding out about one another is important to help to develop and build trust among volunteers. Once trust is built then ideas are shared more freely, and suggestions are more likely to be adopted.

It always amazes me how much you can learn from like-minded yet unfamiliar people.
[P5, Volunteer K]

I think sometimes we are all [so] in and out that we don't get much time together as a team. [P1, Volunteer S]

Yes, ja, they're nice girls, all in it for the right reasons. [P3, Volunteer M]

The stronger emphasis on teamwork was important not only for the volunteers but equally so for the children taught. The element of camaraderie from teamwork can create a sense of security for the children, knowing that there is structure and routine to their programme. It can create security for the children in the programme when messages can be relayed through other volunteers or achievements that have been shared on the communication group can be celebrated by other volunteers. Volunteers that have an ongoing interaction around a shared concern are known as communities of practice. A community of practice is evidently growing as they share their experiences and build a sense of community

I think working in a group creates unison which is great for the kids and the volunteers. I think it's also great for the kids to know that we are in this together. [P5, Volunteer K]

All volunteers suggested that working together was an easy process; the demands on each volunteer to meet up were not too exorbitant. The realities of the volunteers leading busy and full lives apart from volunteering were kept in mind to ensure that the expectations to meet up were not too heavy. This ease of collaboration was an important component of understanding why this collaboration was successful.

I enjoyed that we were all working towards a common goal, but all were experiencing that in slightly different ways depending on which child we were working with, and I think that ultimately provided a richer learning opportunity for ways to tackle the learning process. [P2, Volunteer R]

A programme runs effectively when there is trust among all stakeholders.

Yes – we are reliable. I think this helps build trust between the reader and volunteer, something they [the children] may not have the privilege of experiencing very often. [P5, Volunteer K]

4.21 Frustrations of working together

Some of the things that volunteers found to be frustrating about groupwork was that sometimes the discussion could focus on all the gaps or weaknesses in the programme. If the conversation was not guided correctly, it could stagnate in that thought process. Careful leadership and direction were sometimes required to ensure the conversation kept flowing.

You know I think there are those realities of capacity and I think sometimes people can become a bit unrealistic with expectations. [P1, Volunteer S]

There was also some feedback given surrounding the clarity of the process. In some instances, volunteers found that the goal could have been clearer so that the process of collaborating was made easier. It is interesting to see how some personalities require firmer boundaries to be able to contribute to a project and some people thrive when there is

freedom to discuss anything. It would be helpful to consider both mindsets when structuring collaborative time so that both types of thinking are given equal opportunity to give insight.

It's the first time we have done something like that. It maybe was a bit... people were coming from different directions, but I think if we were more intentional going forward in terms of like goals. [P1, Volunteer S]

4.22 Value of volunteers

It can be concluded that all the volunteers enjoyed the experience of collaboration and learned through this process, which ultimately made the project stronger and should elicit better outcomes among the children who received it.

Testing new ways of teaching and sharing tools and methods among volunteers has allowed for a collaborative process that will hopefully lead to richer learning. [P2, Volunteer R]

The findings have enabled a rich identify of volunteers to be established, people with an awareness of common good, a passion to reduce inequality in their sphere of influence, and with positive associations attached to volunteering. Further insight was gained into the process of developing a collaboration, including the relationship amongst volunteers, a structured process, vulnerability and trust, the use of reflections to enable learning as well as the critical role of a specialised professional.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This study described and analysed the process of collaboration between volunteers involved in language-literacy programmes by examining how volunteers negotiate collaboration in promoting literacy development. This research is important to inform SLTs about volunteers and the potential for collaboration with one another. A study of the collaborative process allowed for attainment of knowledge which can be used to promote educational change for volunteers to be better equipped with knowledge about collaboration. SLTs can gain information necessary to inform and strengthen the quality of instruction and programme implementation, which in turn will influence language-literacy outcomes positively in South Africa. The collaborative process will allow partnerships to form which will be effective in imparting social change in communities.

This study provided insight into the profiles of each of the volunteers: some high similarities in experiences, beliefs, and personalities were noted and this could help to predict the type of person that is likely to volunteer. Some of the findings correspond with current research regarding factors that influence volunteering, such as belief. According to Petrovic, Chapman, and Schofield (2018, in press), volunteering is not only influenced by motivation, social justice, love as the findings suggested it is a behaviour that is promoted and encouraged by religion. One of the unifying factors among volunteers in this project is that they all attended church, and therefore have a belief in a higher power and motivation for loving other people. A person's belief system may be a predictor of his or her longevity as a volunteer. Similar upbringings and childhood experiences were other common themes among volunteers in this study. Many of the volunteers had experience of volunteering and exposure to charity initiatives from their childhood and were influenced by the volunteer history of their parents. This is supported by research in the field which states parental voluntary involvement has a high correlation with adult volunteer participation (Perks & Konecny, 2015). It also provides valuable insights to parents who would like to raise children with a strong social conscience.

This study was able to complement existing research into the motives for volunteering. It was found that people's values were a strong incentive for volunteering, and all the volunteers in this study found a sense of purpose from their altruistic service to others. This can help to promote continuous volunteering among volunteer managers (Petrovic et al., 2018, in press). The attribute of values as an incentive for volunteering refers to expressing or acting on characteristics such as humanitarianism and the role of religion.

There were a few key factors that enabled the process of collaboration to take place in this study. The development of a strong individual identity profile through the bionarrative summaries and points of meeting in the action cycle helped to develop a sense of trust and mutual respect.

Connection at an emotional level with the children in the intervention programme provided a strong basis for engaging in this collaboration, which according to Vareilles et al. (2017) is an essential motivator for collaboration. The driving force behind the development of skill levels of each volunteer can be attributed to their passion for the project as a result of their emotional involvement and connection with the programme. As a result of volunteers' strong emotional ties with the children in the programme, they were personally invested into developing their own literacy facilitation skills. They were committed to ensuring best practice and effective literacy support was given. The depth of this emotional connection can also be attributed to the type of work that each volunteer has chosen to do and to the people they work with. For example, volunteers with a love for children will have a more natural emotional connection when volunteering with children. Erasmus and Morey (2019) state that identifying individual underlying motivations and matching them with specific volunteer activities are essential to ensure volunteer interest and sustainability.

The action cycle and process of collaborating with other volunteers were used as a means of refining their skills and improving their literacy facilitation methods. Day, Martin, Sharp, Gardner, and Barham (2013) refer to this as a peer advocating training approach and describe it as volunteers supporting other volunteers. It is most successful when volunteers possess tendencies of self-motivation and commitment to serving. Success seen in literacy

programmes can be attributed to passion in volunteers and this enables collaboration to take place.

The volunteer group dynamics experienced in this study are unique, as there was cohesion and ease in working together with very little conflict and no competition between volunteers. Power in the group was equalised through the process of the action cycle and all members being equal contributors to the process. There was not one dominant decision maker; rather all members guided the decision-making process. This was critical as a contributing factor towards the commitment of the volunteers to the programme. Boezeman and Ellemers (2007) refer to this as affective organisational commitment, where volunteers feel a sense of emotional attachment to the organisation because they feel 'part of the family'. This type of commitment is most strongly correlated with attendance and performance while volunteering. As it is unlikely that all volunteer groups will share this factor, it is essential that this foundational value be established among volunteer members. It is important that there is a sense of unity and camaraderie among volunteers, as these feelings assist in creating a positive volunteer experience which is important for volunteer longevity.

The importance of vulnerability was highlighted through the research process. D'Amour et al. (2005) refer to this as sharing and contend it is key to establishing a collaboration. Open and honest insight into struggles, frustrations and challenges experienced by volunteers was greatly valued by other volunteers. This vulnerability prompted discussion and conversation which ignited the collaborative process and unified the team. According to Moussavi-Bock (2011), vulnerability holds power because it creates connection. Through group members having the courage to display their vulnerability, it created a greater sense of trust among members which strengthened the collaboration. Without vulnerability, discussions may have remained at a very surface level but in this study more in-depth discussions could occur because of this level of trust. Collaborating over ideas for improvements and ideating solutions to problems can only occur when people are honest about the difficulties and challenges they are experiencing. In this study, the development of trust and being able to show vulnerability among volunteers allowed an acceleration of the collaborative process.

The study also gave insight into some of the structures that make volunteering attractive to people. Volunteers value projects that are structured and prefer to follow a set plan or guidelines with weekly tasks, rather than having unlimited freedom to follow their own inclinations. A sense of routine and planned structure helped volunteers to feel they were adding value in their area of volunteering. This research also helped to inform volunteer groups on what to include when structuring volunteer programmes. A structured programme helps to create a sense of common understanding and insight. This is a strong foundational aspect of collaboration.

Communication was highly valued among volunteers and two of the volunteers mentioned that they had enjoyed the process of meeting to brainstorm and collaborate (e.g., Volunteers R & V). It is important to allow these 'touching-base' moments among volunteers so that there is time, space and opportunity for connection, and ultimately collaboration, to occur. Collaboration added strength to this volunteer project and made it a better project; therefore it is important to allow moments that create opportunities for conversation and discussion around problems and questions. Communication plays an essential role in the process of collaboration, from establishing a context for collaboration through clear articulation in the intervention aims, to beginning the action cycle process by communicating ideas and goals for the intervention (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2005). Communication in terms of listening to other people's suggestions is an important aspect of the reflection and sharing that forms part of collaboration. According to Suarez-Balcazar et al. (2005), communication patterns are best established over face-to-face contact which assists in the development of a collaboration, as developing trust is essential as discussed above.

Meeting together was important as it enabled group members to share their experiences of volunteering informally and to trade stories about humorous experiences they had while facilitating literacy. It also provided insights into the relationship they had with the children they taught. This strengthened the emotional connection that each volunteer felt towards the child seen at the weekly sessions. Forming personal relationships with one another and with the children they teach in the programme has been critical to the sense of purpose volunteers experience. Through meeting in focus groups, these personal elements can be

shared through narratives which strengthen volunteers' connection to the programme. Volunteers benefited greatly from sharing positive experiences. Research suggests that those who receive enthusiastic affirmation to positive news express more positivity in general and that satisfaction is peaked when volunteers share their experiences (Reis et al., 2010). This contributed to the feeling of family experienced from close relationships in affective organisational commitment (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2007), which results in longevity and passion among volunteers.

The action cycle approach required that the group met frequently; this was important as it strengthened the unity between volunteer members as they got to know one another and established relationships. Structure was available, but there was a sense of informality as gatherings did not follow the set agenda of a typical formal meeting. D'Amour et al. (2005) conceptualise this as partnership formation in the process of collaboration. The frequency of meetings meant that there was accountability for ideas that were shared to be followed up as well as a greater sense of support from one another. When suggestions were made about altering the learning environment, these suggestions were turned into actions as volunteers chose a quieter space to work from or modification of the printed material to allow pictures to aid vocabulary retention. Focus groups facilitated the sharing of ideas among volunteers; being able to share knowledge in this setting was important as volunteers could draw from a wider pool of knowledge, and gain fresh insights and ideas to inform their teaching styles.

The personal reflections which formed part of the action cycle were important as they encouraged volunteers to be more self-critical in their volunteering styles; they also strengthened accountability as volunteers were reminded of actions that were suggested at focus groups. This touchpoint of the weekly reflections helped volunteers to be more mindful of their teaching styles and encouraged them to incorporate ideas that had been suggested. This was beneficial to the quality of literacy input of the volunteer programme.

It was important to have an SLT to help give input on literacy-related questions. The nature of this study meant that volunteers were giving literacy support to children and naturally they had challenges around some of the teaching elements. An SLT was able to share her

professional knowledge and give insight into specific language acquisition challenges; her skill set and typical experience in working with a paediatric population allowed her to give ideas for managing behavioural problems and provide creative teaching tips. The SLT brought a sense of purpose to the group as information that was shared through the action cycle process was professional, research based, practical and relevant to the specifics of the group. The SLT could give valuable input during collaborative goal setting to assist the group in setting clear and functional goals to enhance motivation and lead to improved outcomes (Øien et al., 2010).

SLTs engage in collaborative services to support children in a school-based setting or classroom environment (Archibald, 2017). The model of service delivery using a 'pull-out model' (Suleman et al., 2014) cannot sustain the needs of the country in terms of delivering adequate support for literacy development. SLTs must rely on partnerships to serve the population.

Being a consultant to volunteer groups could form an important part of the scope of practice of speech and language therapists. Understanding the role of SLTs and volunteer partnerships has not been well investigated and therefore this research is important as it informs the speech and language community on new roles within their scope of practice. Research on improving volunteer groups is important as volunteers make a valuable contribution to society. They provide services that would otherwise have to be provided by the government and taxpayers; therefore this research is important for the community as it helps to strengthen volunteer groups (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009).

Furthermore, as volunteer groups can readily be found serving vulnerable groups in South Africa, this knowledge of successful collaboration can result in greater access of vulnerable groups to quality learning environments which could set them up for potential future academic success (Moffat & Vincent, 2009). This study showed how a process of collaboration could be achieved among a volunteer group serving in a children's home, and this can be extended to other such environments.

This study reveals insights into an ongoing discussion about language and its relationship to literacy development. It highlights the political failures of the past that have resulted in disparities in basic education in South Africa. Poverty in disadvantaged communities in South Africa is one of the main contributing factors to poor early literacy in children (Wilson, Dickinson, & Rowe, 2013). Another factor is what has recently been termed the 'learning achievement gap', which refers to disparities in literacy development as evidenced in research based on assessments of language development, as well as letter-recognition and phonological awareness skills among groups of different races and social classes (Rodgers, Wang, & Gómez-Bellengé, 2004). More specific to South Africa are the issues of language acquisition and language of learning. English has become the language of business and politics in South Africa, and the assumption by many is that English is the language of power and privilege for the educated few. Many children in the population fall victim to this mentality and as a result experience academic difficulty. The context of this study brings together people from diverse backgrounds: children in orphanages and white women from privileged backgrounds. This is in line with what Volunteer S recognises as part of a post 1994 reconciliation strategy. In the first action cycle there was acknowledgement that the problem volunteers were addressing was a consequence of a long political history which continues into the present. The acknowledgement of these issues shows that if there had been more time in the action cycle, then perhaps there would have been more time for critical engagement on these issues such as why bilingual language learning in South Africa is so challenging. This study is just one action cycle, but the hope is that it will unlock a discussion around this complicated issue.

The element of camaraderie from volunteers in this study created a sense of security for the children in the programme by knowing that there is structure and routine to their programme. It can create security for the children in the programme when messages can be relayed through other volunteers or achievements that have been shared on the communication group can be celebrated by one another. The volunteers in this study began to grow a community of practice, exchanging information and knowledge with one another, and sharing a common passion to improve the intervention. According to Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002), communities of practice are being used increasingly in a

range of areas from child welfare to education, business and public health. Collaboration can result in strategic tools to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based practice. provide a summary/list of the factors here and then go the conclusion

5.2 Clinical implications

The implications of this study are far reaching and inform SLTs, educators and those involved in volunteering or implementing interventions. This study has given insight into the recruitment of the right type of personality for a volunteer-led project, as a group with an easy cohesion and mutual trust aids the process of collaboration. This is important as it will inform personnel in charge of volunteer groups as they look to recruit new volunteers for projects.

Information gleaned from this study is beneficial to volunteer leaders or those who work in environments that might benefit from the support of volunteers. It advises on how to set up successful volunteer groups by establishing strong relationships among volunteers and participants in the intervention, and by adopting a structure of action–reflection to allow moments of brainstorming, idea exchange, sharing of positive experiences, and networking.

SLTs have expertise in literacy development. They have a critical role to play in collaborating with volunteers. SLTs are now informed of how volunteers arrive at collaboration. This collaborative opportunity allows SLTs to be part of a meaningful process of support to volunteers. It is important that SLTs support such volunteer groups so that these volunteer-led interventions can have a wider scope and that ultimately literacy rates can improve in South Africa. SLTs should act as consultants to volunteer groups and intervention programme developers to ensure that effective collaborations can occur. Training should be done by SLTs to inform such groups of the importance of an action–reflection cycle and to equip volunteers with some basic skills that will enable them to perform the task at hand. This research informs the body of speech therapists that they have a critical role in using the resources of volunteers to ensure that there are positive shifts in literacy in South Africa.

5.3 Research Limitations

It is important to note some limitations to this study. Firstly, it may have been beneficial to study the collaborative process over a longer period. This study was conducted over eleven weeks owing to time constraints of the school term; however, the process of collaboration may need to be documented over a slightly longer period.

Secondly, this study was conducted using a volunteer programme visiting a vulnerable population, a children's home. This may have strengthened the emotional ties of volunteers to the programme and it would be interesting to see if results generalise to all populations and settings with volunteer programmes.

The researcher may have had an influence on the data; given the nature of the distance/closeness between the researcher and volunteers, although deemed a strength, could also be considered a weakness as it could have impacted on data as the researcher's ideas and suggestions may have influenced the volunteers subconsciously.

While the goal of the research is to achieve a complete picture of collaboration, the results achieved by the novice researcher can never completely represent all the different ways of conceptualising and describing collaboration.

5.4 Conclusion

The research has profiled the type of person that may be inclined to volunteer, and this informs recruitment procedures for volunteers. The volunteers showed evidence of strong emotional and relational ties with the participants in the intervention programme. This strengthened their commitment to and passion for the cause, and developed their ability to facilitate literacy support. These feelings of passion and commitment were further established through the development of friendships among volunteers as they shared their positive experiences of volunteering.

The process of using an action cycle was successful as it allowed multiple reflections and opportunities to focus the direction of the group. This meant that solutions could be ideated

and challenges solved through viable actions. Using action–reflection as a template for group interactions enabled collaboration to occur as changes were made through networking, exposing vulnerability in sharing experiences, and developing self-critical skills.

There was evidence of collaboration due to actions that were implemented and changes that were made to the intervention. At a programme level, the volunteers assumed the responsibility of sharing their knowledge and experiences with the group. They shifted from being attenders to contributors, and took ownership of different projects to benefit the intervention. This is a positive, as it shows that there is involvement at every level and a good spread of input from all volunteers in the collaboration. There was also a sense of greater purpose that emerged through this collaboration; volunteers were concerned about the longevity of such a project as they saw its value and wanted to ensure it would be sustainable.

The partnerships formed through the collaborative process have been effective as they contribute to what will empower people for social change. The process of the partnership can be termed to be successful because of the evidence of shared decision making and shared power, and the way in which the group shares the workload.

This research has highlighted the importance of an expert, namely an SLT, in literacy support projects to join the collaboration and add value to volunteer-led projects. The role of the SLT brought structure and focus to the questions that volunteers had about specific language acquisition and literacy development. Allowing an SLT professional to add input into the programme increased the levels of trust within the group and resulted in a collaboration. To ensure that more children in South Africa have access to reputable interventions it is necessary for SLTs to collaborate with volunteer-run groups to assist them in providing an effective service and ultimately improve literacy rates in our country.

To summarise, in a structured programme, volunteers were able to successfully negotiate collaboration to promote literacy interventions.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

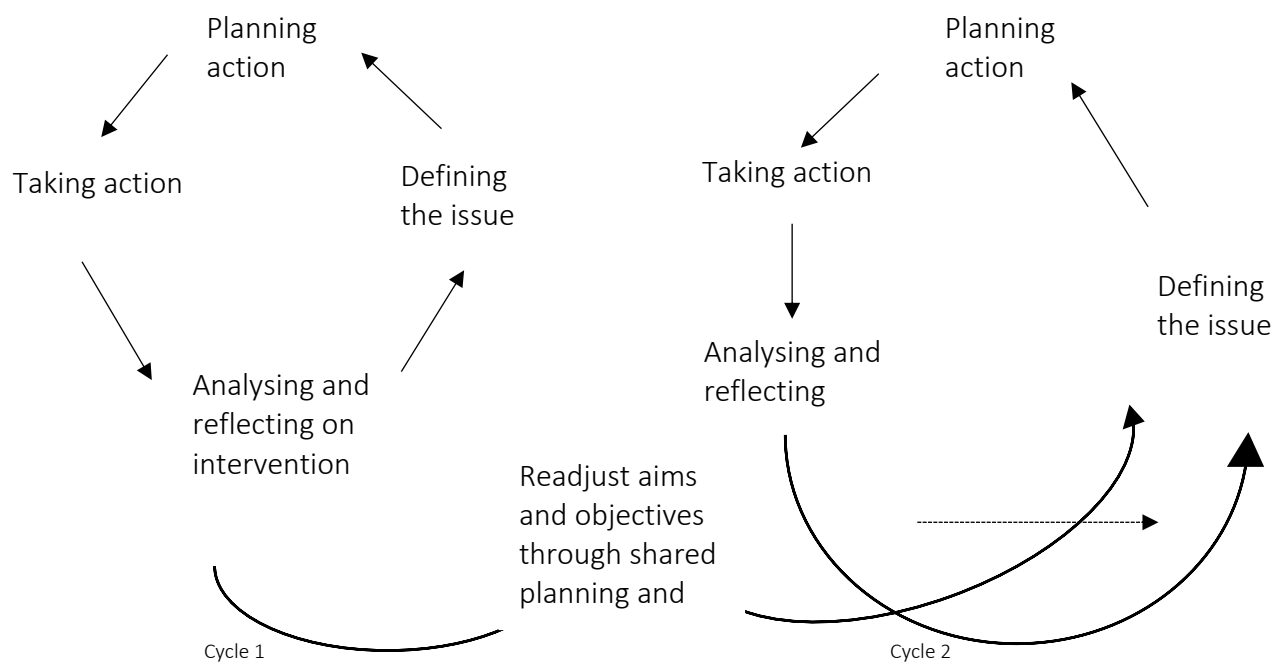


Figure A1. A cyclic process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting used to convert goals and expected results into actions

Appendix B:

Table A1. Research method outline with timeframe

CYCLE 1	Week 1	Bio-narrative Interview Focus Group (defining the issue, planning action)
	Week 2	Reflective Journal
	Week 3	Reflective Journal
	Week 4	Observation (Taking action)
	Week 5	Reflective Journal
	Week 6	Focus Group (analysing and reflecting on intervention/defining the issue/planning action)
CYCLE 2	Week 7	Reflective Journal
	Week 8	Reflective Journal
	Week 9	Observation (taking action)
	Week 10	Reflective Journal
	Week 11	Focus Group (analysing and reflecting on intervention) Individual Interview

Appendix C:

Interview Schedule

Opening

A. (Establish Rapport) [shake hands] My name is _____ ; thank you for taking the time to have a conversation together today.

B. (Purpose) I would like you to tell me some stories about your life, background, your education, some experiences you have had, and some of your hobbies and interests in order to learn more about you.

C. (Motivation) I hope to use this information to understand a bit more about the knowledge, interest and resources you have and how you can use these in the reading programme.

(Transition: Let me begin by asking you some questions about you.)

Non-interrupted initial narrative: **How did you come to be a volunteer?** (Let the story run.)

If the participant is not forthcoming with information, probe the following areas.

Body

A. (Topic) General demographic information

1. Tell me a bit about yourself.
 2. How long have you lived in Durban?
 3. Do you have a small or large family?
- (Transition to the next topic.)

B. (Topic) Education

1. Tell me about what you do for work.
 2. If you could change your field of work, what would you change to?
 3. What do you love about your job?
- (Transition to the next topic.)

C. (Topic) Experiences

1. What are some of your hobbies and interests?
 2. What do you love most about doing that?
- (Transition to the next topic.)

D. (Topic) Reading intervention

1. What made you decide to volunteer for this programme?
2. What is your favourite thing about being involved in the programme?
3. What has been a highlight for you?
4. What do you think you offer to the success of this programme?

(Transition: Well, it has been a pleasure finding out more about you.)

E. (Closing)

(Maintain Rapport) I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know?

Appendix D:

Observation Schedule

This schedule will be used informally to help to add direction to the observation experience.

The volunteer is:	Observed	Comments
Following the reading intervention teaching material	?	
Using own creative teaching style	?	
Following the lead of the child	?	
Using language learning opportunities	?	
Explaining new vocabulary to the child	?	
Implementing actions that have been discussed	?	
Speaking to other volunteers/ Discussing ideas	?	
Introducing alternative methods of teaching as suggested by another volunteer	?	
Using creative problem solving	?	
Other significant observations		
General Comments		

Appendix E:

Focus-Group Schedule

Running the focus-group sessions

- Take a note of the group session and record this on any tapes or note sheets used during that session.
- Try to get everyone involved in the discussion.
- Record both majority and minority views.

Before the group assemblies

- Test the recording equipment to make sure it is working.
- Ensure there is adequate seating and prepare the environment appropriately.
- Ensure that paperwork is ready before the participants arrive.
- Participants should all have signed the Participation Consent Form.

Preparing to start the session

- Make sure that everyone is comfortable before you start and that everyone can see one another.
- Begin the recording.

Introduction to the session

Hello. My name is Amy. I'd like to start off by thanking each of you for taking time to participate today. We'll be here for about an hour [or other time frame].

The reason we're here today is to gather your opinions and thoughts about the reading programme we are all currently involved with.

I'm going to lead our discussion today. I shall be asking you questions and then encouraging and moderating our discussion.

I also would like you to know this focus group will be tape recorded. The identities of all participants will remain confidential. The recording allows us to revisit our discussion for the purposes of developing research papers and presentations.

To allow our conversation to flow more freely, I'd like to go over some ground rules.

1. *Only one person speaks at a time. This is important as our goal is to make a written transcript of our conversation today. It is difficult to capture everyone's experience and perspective on our audio recording if there are multiple voices at once.*
2. *Please avoid private conversations.*

3. *Everyone doesn't have to answer every single question, but I'd like to hear from each of you today as the discussion progresses.*
4. *This is a confidential discussion in that I shall not report your names or who said what to your colleagues or supervisors. Names of participants will not even be included in the final report about this meeting.*
5. *We stress confidentiality because we want an open discussion. We want all of you to feel free to comment on each other's remarks.*
6. *There are no 'wrong answers', just different opinions. Say what is true for you, even if you're the only one who feels that way. I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel.*
7. *Let me know if you need a break. The bathrooms can be found [explain location]. Feel free to enjoy a beverage and a snack.*
8. *Are there any questions?*

DISCUSSION 1: INTRODUCTION

1. *Your name.*
2. *Your interest in literacy development.*
3. *What you enjoy most about the intervention.*

DISCUSSION 2: FOCUS-GROUP QUESTIONS

Question 1: Defining the issue

- How have you found our process of working together?
- Any concerns with the way the intervention is being implemented?
- Any ways we should run the intervention differently?
- Is there any knowledge/assistance that you feel you would benefit from with regard to the process of literacy development?

Question 2: Planning action

- What steps can we take to improve the issue (this will develop in the previous question).

Question 3: Analysing and reflecting on intervention

- After implementing an action, how do you think we have improved?
- Do you think we can alter the way we work together?

Ending the session

- Summarise the discussions and thank participants for their time.

Appendix F



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Faculty of Health Sciences

Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

Divisions of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
Nursing and Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy



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Dear Mandy Goble

Director of Durban Child and Youth Care Centre

A study of the collaborative process of volunteers in a literacy intervention programme in support of vulnerable children in South Africa

My name is Amy Zoetmulder and I am a speech-language therapist and a master's student at the University of Cape Town.

I am contacting you to seek permission to conduct a study at your institution under the guidance of my supervisor, Associate Professor Harsha Kathard from the Department of Communication Sciences. I have gained ethics approval from the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics committee (Ethics reference number: 317/2018).

The aim of this study is to describe and analyse the process of collaboration between volunteers who are involved in a language-literacy programme by looking at how volunteers negotiate collaboration in promoting literacy development. This will inform speech and language Therapists more about volunteers and the potential for collaboration with one another.

The Neema reading intervention that is currently being conducted in the Durban Children's Home weekly will be the literacy intervention and I shall aim to describe and analyse how volunteers who are involved in this programme negotiate the process of collaboration. The study will focus purely on the volunteers that conduct the intervention and will in no way implicate the children in your care. Data

collection at your institution will take place on a Wednesday when the volunteers come in to do the weekly reading programme.

When the study is completed, the information gathered will be analysed and summarised in a report.

It is expected that there will be no risks to your institution, staff and children while the study is being conducted.

If, at any time, you decide that you do not want the study to take place at your institution, it is your right to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study.

If you have any questions about the project, please call Amy Zoetmulder: 0828350504 or email: amyzoetmulder@gmail.com

The UCT FHS Human Research Ethics Committee can be contacted on 021 406 6338 in case participants have any questions regarding their rights and welfare as research subjects on the study.

Thank you for your help.

Amy Zoetmulder

Associate Professor Harsha Kathard

Speech-language therapist/master's student

Supervisor

Appendix G



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Faculty of Health Sciences
Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Divisions of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
Nursing and Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy



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INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Dear Volunteers

My name is Amy Zoetmulder and I am a speech-language therapist and a master's student at the University of Cape Town. I am inviting you to participate in my study.

I shall be investigating how volunteers that are involved in literacy interventions can work together to improve literacy aims in South Africa. I shall be using the Neema Reading Programme as the intervention through which the study will take place. As you are currently a volunteer in this intervention programme, I am contacting you to tell you about the study and to invite you to take part in the study.

The title of my study

A study of the collaborative process of volunteers in a literacy intervention programme in support of vulnerable children in South Africa.

The study is being done to gain information necessary to inform and strengthen the quality of instruction and programme implementation of literacy interventions, which in turn will positively influence language-literacy outcomes in South Africa.

What I shall be doing

I shall be observing how volunteers work together while implementing the intervention programme; this will happen during the usual 45-minute weekly teaching slot at the Durban Children's Home. Volunteers will also fill in weekly reflections of their experiences while teaching. There will be two one-on-one interviews and one focus-group session within a six-week cycle to gain further insight into the process of collaboration. I shall record on paper what I observe. I shall use an audio recorder to record the interview and focus-group sessions so that these can be transcribed. I shall maintain the confidentiality of the volunteer by not disclosing any personal details; in-depth interviews will be

conducted in a private place. Your identity will be known to other focus-group participants and the researcher cannot guarantee that others in the group will respect the confidentiality of the group. It will be expected that any information that is shared during focus groups will be kept confidential; all group members will be asked to sign a confidentiality form. Any information I record on paper and audio recordings I take will be held in a confidential place that is only accessible by me. The research will take a total of 12 weeks.

What I shall not be doing

I shall not share the personal information of any of the volunteers. I shall not treat you in a different way if you choose not to take part in the study.

Why you are being invited to be in the study

My study is focusing on volunteers who are involved in literacy-related interventions. As you are involved in the Neema reading programme, I invite you to take part in my study.

Benefits of taking part

Information will be gleaned about how best volunteers can work together. It is the hope that we will be able to improve the literacy rates of the children who participate in the intervention.

Risks of taking part

There are no risks to your consent to taking part in the study. No punishment will occur if you choose not to take part.

You have the right to change your mind at any time about taking part in the study.

No rewards (e.g. money or food) will be given if you consent to taking part in the study.

When the study is completed, the information gathered will be analysed and summarised in a report.

Please confirm if you are willing to be a volunteer in this study.

If you have any questions about the project, please call Amy Zoetmulder: 0828350504

The UCT FHS Human Research Ethics Committee can be contacted on 021 406 6338 in case participants have any questions regarding their rights and welfare as research subjects on the study.

Thank you for your help

Amy Zoetmulder
Speech-language therapist/master's student

Associate Professor Harsha Kathard
Supervisor

Appendix H



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Divisions of Communication Sciences and Disorders,
Nursing and Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy



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CONSENT FORM

I. The Study

Title of the Study

A study of the collaborative process of volunteers in a literacy intervention programme in support of vulnerable children in South Africa.

Name and contact details of researcher

Amy Zoetmulder 082 835 0504

Name and contact details of supervisors

Harsha Kathard 021 406 6041

II. Agreement

- ☐ I, _____, agree to participate as a participant in this study.
- ☐ I do/do not understand the project information provided (DELETE WHERE APPLICABLE).
- ☐ I do/do not understand that my confidentiality will be upheld by the researcher (DELETE WHERE APPLICABLE).
- ☐ I agree to maintain confidentiality of information shared in this focus group.
- ☐ I do/do not understand that all information obtained during the study will be used for purposes of this study only (DELETE WHERE APPLICABLE).
- ☐ I do/do not understand that I may withdraw from the project at any time (DELETE WHERE APPLICABLE).

The UCT FHS Human Research Ethics Committee can be contacted on 021 406 6338 in case participants have any questions regarding their rights and welfare as research subjects on the study.

Participant's Signature

Date